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**RICHARD CORFIELD**  
**OF SOMALILAND**

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

INDIA UNDER ROYAL EYES

THE SILENCE OF MEN

THE LAST RESORT

(A SOMALILAND STORY)





*Richard Corfield.*

# **RICHARD O'NEILL** **OF SOMALILAND**

BY  
**H. F. PREVOST BATTEN**

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. H. B. B.

LONDON  
**EDWARD ARNOLD**  
1914





# **RICHARD CORFIELD**

## **OF SOMALILAND**

BY

**H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY**

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

**LONDON**  
**EDWARD ARNOLD**

**1914**

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TO  
RICHARD CORFIELD'S OLD COMRADES  
AND  
MR. C. DE S. DUNN  
WHO WON THE VICTORY HE HAD PLANNED  
AT DUL MADORA

## "BEYOND THESE VOICES."

We strive to pierce the veil, and deem,  
Not wholly vain it is, the dream  
That they who pass beyond our ken  
Hear echoes from the world of men.

Ah, wistful hearts! Ah, straining eyes!  
Do ye not know that death is wise!  
That death is merciful to spread  
His veil between us and our dead!

Lest they should taste the keener sting,  
To hear Earth's evil rumours ring;  
The cankered taunt, the venom'd lie,  
The honour stained they held so high.

May we not praise him: young and brave,  
Who lies there in his desert grave!  
May we not say that, after all,  
He fell as Englishmen should fall!

No! We must deprecate and scold;  
Hint he was rash, was over-bold;  
Throw lurking shadows round his name,  
Deny him his poor need of fame.

Then rest, O valiant soul! nor know,  
We rate your gift of life so low;  
And Death be tender still, and keep  
Our shameful voices from your sleep.

SIDNEY LOW.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE lives of so many men have been enshrined in print that might so much more profitably have been left "writ in water," that one may well be conscious that the determination to write of a life so short as was Richard Corfield's, and so dependent for its fame on his manner of resigning it, may seem to stand in need of an apology. It is true that everyone who had to do with Corfield was not only attracted by his personality, but immensely impressed by some secret source of power in him which had an influence little short of astounding upon savage peoples. It would be easy, moreover, to multiply eulogies on his character by those who had the honour of his friendship, since the unanimity of insistence on his great qualities has been most encouraging to a biographer; but even a sense of its value as an inspiration would hardly have justified its setting forth in a Life. And though it is true, too, that Corfield not only lived nobly, but died as he had lived, even his intrepid death would not have excused this volume, had a mere gallant impulse been responsible for the laying down of his life.

It may still be remembered how when the news of Richard Corfield's death was received in England, the Secretary of State for the Colonies expressed in the House of Commons an astonishment at the position of the Camel Corps, which strongly suggested that a flagrant disobedience of orders had been responsible for the disaster, and that, later, a Blue Book was issued in which a monstrous attempt was made to blacken the dead man's fame. Happily, such an effort to darken the memory of the heroic dead is so rare an event in British politics that a vigorous protest was forthcoming, which made clear that the new method was

not at all to the taste of a good many people. But it left still isolated and inexplicable the wrong which had been done, with all its serious consequences to the future service of the State, and it is partly because it is impossible to prevent a repetition of that sort of wrong without explaining the cause of it, and impossible to explain the cause without telling the story ■ Richard Corfield, that this book has been written.

Corfield died for the old faith of the English, their faith in courage, and honour, and pity, and self-sacrifice,—most of all where a dependent people are concerned,—in all those virtues on which, as their stability has attested, the great British dependencies have been founded, and with the decay of which they will certainly collapse.

The qualities which made John Nicholson a god to his Sikhs, made Richard Corfield the Sent of Allah to his Somalis, yet neither did more than just be what they were, English gentlemen trained in the old traditions and quite *incapable* of violating them. ■ is the incapacity which must be realised, for it was sheer inability to behave like a cur that cost Corfield his life, and the Mullah some five hundred of his best marksmen.

In these pages an attempt has been made to tell the story of Somaliland during the last ten years. It is told here because it cannot be found elsewhere, and because familiarity with it is essential to the understanding of Corfield's great act of sacrifice. It is a story which in its earlier years contains many deeds of splendid, but unavailing valour, and is in its later, a record of infirmity and callousness which surpassed in the horrors they empowered the worst exuberance of Congo brutality. It is surely time that Englishmen should know that for three years an English Government made itself responsible, by breaking its sacred pledges, for the flaying and burning alive of men, women and children, and mutilations too fiendish to be mentioned, until a third of the entire male population of a British "Protectorate" had been done to death.

Be that as it may, it is essential for those who would understand Corfield's action to be able to think of him for nine months in that ravaged land with the evidence of its still bleeding agonies before his eyes always, the tale of its continuing horrors for ever in his ears, the gaps where his murdered comrades should have been, goading his indignation, and to picture his state of mind when the order came to him once more to abandon these wretched people to their fate. He had been severely reprimanded because with more than a hundred fighting men at his command he had gone out to rescue, from a dozen Dervishes, the tribesmen he had been sent to control. He was told that however small might be the band of Dervishes he must permit them to murder and loot at their will, within a stone's throw of his camp, if it so pleased them, and that the only licence he was permitted, where Dervishes were concerned, was to run away from them. He was told distinctly and emphatically that his force might be used, as it had been used, for killing "friendly" natives, but never against their enemies, and that "no discretionary power of any sort on this subject is allowed."

It was open to Corfield at that point to resign his command, and so deliver over the men who had trusted him, to destruction, and relieve himself of an impossible situation. He chose the nobler course. Resignation would have secured his career, but would have left unredeemed his personal honour. To remain and disregard the solemn warning given him would be his professional ruin, but it might save the Somali. At any rate there was no other way open to him to call his country's attention to the horrors that were being done. It was the old question of the expediency of giving a life for the people. Corfield judged it expedient, and stayed on. He knew that the big Dervish raid, of which he had had warning, would soon be there to challenge his decision. Whether he expected to survive such a fight as Dul Madoba is of no moment; he knew that it must end either him or



his career. He judged rightly the capacity of the force he had trained to strike a staggering blow at the Mullah, and hoped even ■ that blow failed to destroy his influence, it would prove the possibility of restraining it with a local levy. And so in two ways he would discharge his debt. England would be roused to righteous condemnation, and a way would be shown by which Somaliland might be saved.

But apart from expediency, no other course was open to him. He had been ordered to run away, to abandon a dependent people to its fate, to break all the pledges he had been encouraged to make, to commit, in short, an outrage on every instinct of an English gentleman. That was the issue between him and the Government. He was ordered to do in a public capacity what would have secured, if done in a private one, his exclusion from the decent company of his fellows. It may be deemed expedient to perform such orders, but to a man like Corfield it is not possible, nor has it ever been possible to anyone who has worn nobly the English name.

Week after week for two years after his return to the country in 1908 Corfield had endured the shame which had been heaped on British officials in the country, and it had only been his intense loyalty to the belief that British honour would ultimately be asserted which enabled him to endure the long months of humiliation which ended in the abandonment of the country. One trusts that in our island story it would be impossible to match that parade of national abasement. It almost broke Corfield's allegiance, and he would certainly never have returned to the country to face the possibility of its repetition.

He went back plainly with the conviction, which was also encouraged in the natives, that the Government meant to amend their ways, and his revolt dates from the hour when he learnt that such hopes were delusive. He had been allowed for nine months to implant those hopes in the native mind, and to base an extraordinarily successful political campaign on a faith in a renewal of British

supremacy in the interior. When he found himself deluded he could do no more than share the fate of those ■ had been led to delude.

"He was the straightest, whitest, most honourable man I have ever met," writes Mr. H. T. Powell, the Treasurer of Somaliland for many years, who had formed his high opinion of Corfield's qualities on the Somali Coast, in one of the most trying climates of the world to a white man's character, where even the strongest and most genial of men become like nervous bears, showing not a sign of those superior virtues with which elsewhere they have been credited, so that there can be no suspicion in his views of rose colour reflected from their surroundings.

A biographer may be assumed prejudiced, though a man must be great indeed if, after all the unconsidered littlenesses of his life have been revealed to his chronicler, the prejudice is in his favour still.

There thus may be an advantage in giving here this eulogy of a comrade, which was received most unexpectedly after the rest of the book had been completed. Mr. Powell writes from Berbera:—

"When Corfield arrived in Somaliland in October 1905 as a junior Political Officer, nothing was known of his qualifications, but he soon displayed those qualities the possession of which is essential for the control of such a race as the Somalia. He had tact, patience, sympathy, great discriminatory powers, and a very keen sense of humour. He was very firm, and above all was, in my humble opinion, the best judge of character of any man I knew. His work at first was more or less of a semi-military nature, but when his chance came to take up purely political work, he was undoubtedly the right man, and he quickly became the right-hand man of his immediate superior—Captain C. E. M. Dansey, the then chief Political Officer. His methods of working with the natives were always a source ■ interest to me whenever I had the opportunity of

observing them. He never seemed to forget a face, and was always *au fait* with the history of any native with whom he had any dealings.

"A native who came in to see Corfield would possibly and probably have a long string of grievances against some other tribe, and would air them at some length until suddenly reminded by Corfield of some unsettled previous claim against his own tribe, and would be told that his complaints would be listened to when he had settled the outstanding claim.

"If he found it necessary to inflict a fine on any tribe, or had settled a case in which one tribe had to receive *dia* (blood money), which is usually paid in the shape of stock, he would give them so long to pay. When that time expired he sent for the headman of the tribe and asked whether it had been paid. If not, he would add a certain percentage to the amount and instruct them to pay the increased *dia* or fine within so many days. If this was not complied with, out went Corfield with a handful of mounted police, and he would then help himself to the required number of animals. This method, to Western ideas, may sound a little drastic, but the Somalis appreciate it, as in former days, and after our withdrawal from the interior in 1910, any tribe looting another knew full well that the looted tribe would not remain for long before making an endeavour to recover a similar or, preferably, a greater amount of loot from the aggressors in the first instance. Corfield by these methods made himself both feared and respected.

"He had for a long time the most difficult district to control, as the grazing grounds of the natives abutted on those of the Dervishes. It was in a very unsettled and unruly state when he took it over, but in very little over a year it became quiet, and cases were being settled which had defied settlement hitherto.

"In another direction Corfield seemed to be gifted with the power to make his subordinates real capable officials.

Without bullying or worrying he seemed to extract every ounce of efficiency out of them. Clerks and others seemed to improve like magic directly they came under his supervision.

"His last clerk was an Arab who showed very great sorrow after Corfield's death. His boy Dualah and his interpreter Jama Gailih gave him as much affection as a Somali ■ capable of. They died by his side at Dul Madoba, but I am sure they would have given their lives a dozen times over if by so doing they could have saved their master.

"By Corfield's death Somaliland and its inhabitants have lost an official whose place it will be practically impossible to fill.

"His fellow-officials have lost a noble and loyal friend. Some of us in particular have suffered a very great personal loss.

"His bravery was shown by the manner in which he died.

"He was the straightest, whitest, most honourable man I have ever met . . . and I can only say in conclusion that I never can hope to have a truer friend than poor old Dick Corfield.

"May the Lord rest his soul."

Since Captain Dansey's name is mentioned in this letter, it may be as well to add what he wrote, far more hurriedly than he would have wished, on his departure for the Congo, on this side of Corfield's character. "Richard Corfield served directly under and with me; I am proud to think of that now. I found him deliberately disobedient never, and I can think of many cases when he had to carry out orders which were altogether repugnant to him. He was one of the few men I have ever known the Somalis respect, and that they will only give to a man of action and one who adheres most rigidly to his word; these two things are essential with Somalis. In his dealings with them he was very patient and had a wonderful knack of getting at the truth. They all knew that ■ meant what he said,—if he told a raided

tribe or an injured Somali that he would look into their troubles and adjust them, they were quite happy and did not bother any more. His loyalty was great . . . his sense of humour was wonderful; when things looked their worst he would come out with some dry, caustic remark which would set everyone laughing."

Half a dozen pages might be filled with eulogies written by men who served with Corfield.

Some will be found where they have fitted of their own accord into the story, the rest are but repetitions of admiration for his great qualities, his courage, his generosity, his gentleness, his entire unselfishness, his keen sense of honour, his indifference to adversity, his readiness in danger, the equity of his decisions, the soundness of his judgment, his unfailing humour, his unshakable good comradeship.

It is remarkable that at least half of these use the same phrase about his courage, "he was the most fearless man I have ever met," and that after that the most common reference is to his kindness. But perhaps one may best leave the proof of all he was to the telling of his story.

In writing of Somaliland one is faced at once with difficulties of spelling, and it is not pretended that they are solved here. It might perhaps be expected that the officials of the Protectorate would agree how to write the names of the places they inhabit, but they do not, and the official handbook of the War Office, crammed as it is with cordially acknowledged virtues, is in this respect not much better. One finds, for example, in the Colonial Reports as many as three renderings of one small town of five letters—Zaila, Zeila, and Zeyla; and when one comes to tribal names especially attractive to error, such, for example, as the Mijarten, the variety is far greater. In the War Office report there are variations in the text, between the text and the maps, and between one map and another. There is no intention to be too captious, though it would seem that a nearer approach ■

uniformity might be achieved; it would be an advantage, for example, in dealing with the East, to have the choice of less than fifteen forms of spelling for so common a word as Muhammad, even ■ the least correct variant be adopted, and it ■ hoped that the existence of official variations will be remembered if there be, as is only too likely, some repetition of them in this volume, though amongst these must not be reckoned the discrepancies imposed by quotation.

An effort has been made to render as far as possible the Somali meaning in the spelling of names; thus Bohotle, the more common form, gives place to Bohotleh, the termination *leh*,—the name nearly rhymes with motley—being significant of possession. This, however, has not been pressed to alter forms which have attained a practical uniformity. Wadamago is thus preferred to the more correct Wadamagoa—"the place which cuts the buckets," which also gives a sense of the accent on the final syllable, and Dolbahanta is retained for the same reason.

One may, perhaps, mention that a word of very common reference, Haud, is not pronounced *hoard*, but more nearly to rhyme with *cowed*, the difference lying in the slightest separation of the vowels and a suspicion of the first being the more accented.

In Nigeria the spelling of names is still chaotic and alters with the issue of every fresh map. An effort has been made to follow the findings of the more recent cartographers, but no guarantee is given as to the accuracy of the result.

A wise distrust may also be extended to all figures quoted for that country, it having proved impossible to reconcile those of the most competent authorities.

It has been inevitable when dealing with Somaliland that the truth should be spoken of the policy which has been pursued there by one of the great parties of the State. Hard things have been said of ■ in these pages, but they are intended to apply to the policy and not to the party, which has so much to the credit of its humanity where

other questions are concerned, and it is no fault of the writer ■ the history of our recent dealings with Somaliland makes unpleasant reading.

The accuracy of that story as set down here may be accepted, for no statement has been advanced without justification from official sources, permission for the use of which must be gratefully acknowledged.

Where quotation marks are used without other acknowledgment the reference is always to a Blue Book or Colonial Report, and the italics in such cases are always the abstractor's. Where extracts have been made from Corfield's letters, it may be assumed, unless otherwise accredited, that they were written to his mother.

It is on these letters, written with great regularity, that one has had to rely for the details of his Nigerian and the greater part of his Somaliland service.

Scarcely anything has been taken from these letters but the bare record of facts, with an occasional comment upon their tendency, and not a word of that intense devotion to his mother which, week after week, for thirteen years, they so touchingly attest. Also much of his shrewd appreciation of politics has been omitted, as intended, at the time at any rate, for her eye alone.

For the rest a sense of deep indebtedness must be expressed to all those who have contributed their recollections, and especially to Captain C. E. Dansey, Captain C. Jorgensen, Dr. R. E. Drake-Brockman, and Mr. H. T. Powell, his fellow-politicals in Somaliland, to Captain T. W. Pragnell and Mr. W. R. Rumbold, who were with him in Nigeria, and to his South African comrades, including Mr. H. Dene, one of his oldest and closest friends.

It has been impossible to give here more than a superficial view of the Somali people; any who would know them better should read Dr. R. E. Drake-Brockman's learned and deeply interesting study of them called *British Somaliland*.

# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	vii

## PART I.

### YOUTH.

CHAP.		
I.	"SERVA FIDEM" . . . . .	1
II.	MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE . . . . .	6
III.	THE CALL OF THE BLOOD . . . . .	14

## PART II.

### THE LIFE OF ADVENTURE.

IV.	WINDING UP THE WAR . . . . .	20
-----	------------------------------	----

## PART III.

### THE HORN OF AFRICA.

V.	THE MULLAH . . . . .	29
VI.	THE FOUR EXPEDITIONS . . . . .	35
VII.	REVISED ADMINISTRATION . . . . .	■
VIII.	THE LAND OF SPICES . . . . .	46
IX.	THE PEOPLE WITHOUT A PILLOW . . . . .	52
X.	"HANDING OFF" A LION . . . . .	■
XI.	THE TROUBLING OF THE WATERS . . . . .	■
XII.	AN ADVANCE TO THE AIN . . . . .	83
XIII.	MANŒUVRING FOR POSITION . . . . .	93



CHAP.	PAGE
XIV. VACCINATION . . . . .	100
XV. THE WINGATE MISSION . . . . .	110
XVI. STAGNATION . . . . .	122
XVII. THE MISSING REPORT . . . . .	126
XVIII. A PARODY OF PROTECTION . . . . .	132
XIX. EVACUATION . . . . .	137

## PART IV.

## NORTHERN NIGERIA.

XX. THE LAND OF LANGUAGES . . . . .	151
XXI. THE PAGAN COUNTRY . . . . .	160
XXII. THE PLAGUE OF WATERS. . . . .	172
XXIII. THE KALERI PATROL . . . . .	179

## PART V.

## UNTEMPERED MORTAR.

XXIV. AN OFFICIAL INDICTMENT . . . . .	169
XXV. ALTERNATIVES . . . . .	194
XXVI. THE SLAVE OF GOD . . . . .	196
XXVII. CAMELS . . . . .	199
XXVIII. THE CONSTABULARY AT WORK . . . . .	207
XXIX. BURAO REOCCUPIED . . . . .	216
XXX. THE MIRACLE OF HARGEISA . . . . .	222
XXXI. AN INCREDIBLE REPRIMAND . . . . .	226
XXXII. THE LONELY VIGIL . . . . .	236
XXXIII. DUL MADORA . . . . .	240
XXXIV. FOR ENGLAND'S HONOUR . . . . .	250
XXXV. THE VALIANT COMPANY . . . . .	253
NOTE . . . . .	257

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

RICHARD CORFIELD . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A DIBALTIQ . . . . .	FACING PAGE 54
PHYSICAL DRILL . . . . .	54
RICHARD CORFIELD AND HIS POLITICAL ESCORT AT UPPER SHEIKH . . . . .	90
A DIBALTIQ . . . . .	116
RICHARD CORFIELD DISTRIBUTING ARMS TO THE "FRIENDLIES" IN BURAO PORT JUST BEFORE THE EVACUATION . . . . .	148
THE WATERING-PLACE . . . . .	148
BATHING POOL AT PANTAM . . . . .	156
DURING THE FIGHT AT GANAWARI . . . . .	164
BREAKING UP THE TOWN OF GANAWARI . . . . .	164
THE ZARIBA AT HOSE . . . . .	168
LIEUTENANT FRAGWELL AND CORFIELD IN THE ZARIBA AT HOSE . . . . .	168
TIN PROSPECTING ON THE ROAD . . . . .	182
CORFIELD'S LION CUB . . . . .	206
SHIPPING CAMELS AT DORU FOR THE CONSTABULARY . . . . .	206
LOADING UP THE CAMELS . . . . .	212
A HALT FOR THE NIGHT . . . . .	224
RICHARD CORFIELD AND HIS CAMEL . . . . .	248
MAP OF SOMALILAND, SHOWING AREA OF OPERATIONS . . . . .	<i>At End</i>



# RICHARD CORFIELD OF SOMALILAND.

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## *PART I.—YOUTH.*

### CHAPTER I

#### SERVA FIDEM.

"We have all," said the cynic, "the misfortune to possess ancestors: to a few is added the infelicity of being able to trace them."

The infelicity is, however, not always noticeable, and there still appears to be a prejudice, despite our growing ignorance of heredity, in favour of being able to name the branches of the family tree.

That on which Richard Corfield grew can at least claim roots that are buried deep in the centuries.

The name is derived from the lands of Corfield, sometimes spelt Corfhull, on the river Corve, part of the Manor and Parish of Long Stanton, Shropshire. The Manor is mentioned in Domesday Book as being held by Herbert under Roger de Lacy. There was a Roger de Corfhull who granted lands in Old Corfhull in 1250; another Roger is mentioned in 1274, a Reginald in 1295, a Richard in 1320, another Roger in 1344, and a Richard of Corfield, who married a daughter of Sir Nicholas Strelly, and was buried at Cardington in 1390.

From about that date Richard seems to have become the prænomen of the clan, and thenceforward we can trace them, with their marriages to other great Shropshire families,

de Kindersley, Corbet of Mortem Corbet, Churchman, de Lutwyche, Langford and Doughty, adding, with an heiress of the fifteenth century, Chatwall, still the family seat, to their holdings in Corve Dale and Long Stanton.

The Parish Church of Cardington bears records of their resting-places from the fourteenth century, and for long years the family remained a power on those romantic Shropshire moors that lie split by the crest of Cæsar Caradoc, that most ancient of British rocks, between the Long Mynd and Wenlock Edge.

In Shropshire, if they made little else, they made men; they had to make them. With the Raiders of Cheshire on one border and the Welsh marches on the other, there was not much space for quiet living, as its thirty-two castles, more than one-sixth of the entire number in England, significantly attest; and it was along those outliers of the Cambrian Hills amid which the Corfields had their home, that the uncertainty of life continued longest, and a man's might was most in demand. It was a country that had bred greatness; Earl Godwin, Sweyn, Harold, Queen Edith, Edward the Confessor, Edwin and Morcar, all held land there before the Conquest, and from the twelfth century until after the Civil War there was little fighting in England in which it did not play a part.

One might look in vain for likelier places to yield that old yeoman stock with the eager interest in its blood which leads a man to great adventure and leaves him with little liking for anything else, and any Richard Corfield had the right to plead in excuse of such a craving the call of that stout Saxon strain which faced unflinching the sword and fire of Wales from the times of Æthelstan till those of the first Edward, blood which still sets its mark there on carriage and character, despite later mixtures of less determined elements.

Small wonder that such a clan gave freely of its sons to the Services, or at least to one of them, as monuments to

soldier Corfields attest in the Church of St. Jacob's in Heanor Town, where a hundred and fifty years ago a Major Corfield commanded; another Major Corfield, of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, falling in 1809 during the capture of Martinique.

Of later years the family's allegiance has been divided between the Church and the Army. Richard Corfield's great-grandfather was the only one of seven brothers who was not in the Services; his grandmother on the Corfield side was a Channer, a name borne by many distinguished soldiers. Perhaps no man saw more of desperate fighting in India than did General William Robert Corfield of the Taunton branch of the family, the very list of his battles reads like a romance; his son, Colonel C. J. Corfield, is still serving in India, and his brother, General Frederick Corfield, had a scarcely less adventurous career.

Richard Corfield's great-uncle, also one of seven brothers, a mighty traveller, conferred one signal service on the world, since in the interior of South America, then an almost unknown region, where his love for savage life had led him, he had the good fortune to succour Charles Darwin, who nearly died in his arms of malarial fever, acquired during the voyage of the *Beagle*. The youngest of this seven, Frederick, led a strenuous life as rector of a parish in County Donegal, to which he had been presented by the Marquis of Conyngham. Here in the wild north-west of Ireland his six sons were born, and here Conyngham, the second of them, Richard Corfield's father, learnt that love of outdoor life with horse, boat or gun which distinguished him throughout his too brief career. Despite the delicacy to which he was so soon to succumb, he was a magnificently made man, standing over six feet, and rowed in his College boat.

It was General Charles Gordon, of the ever-victorious army, who, meeting him just before he went to Cambridge, remarked that he had a soldier's figure, and asked him what

he was going to do with it; adding characteristically, when told that the Church was his destination, that he was "entering the best of all the Services."

He succeeded his father as Rector of Heanor, Derbyshire, and shortly afterwards married Henrietta, third daughter of Henry Edwards of Westgate, Winchester, and at Heanor Rectory, on 27th April 1882, Richard Conyngham Corfield was born.

But the quiet of a country rectory was to bring to the young Richard none of those measured and unmoving memories which set on childhood so deep a mark, and so often determine its ultimate energies.

Owing to the state of his father's health, the winter of 1888 had to be spent in Mentone, and the following winter at Bournemouth, and these expedients proving insufficient, a complete change of climate was ordered, so that in 1888, the bishop having granted a year's leave of absence, the family migrated to Tasmania, Mr. Corfield, his wife, little Richard and his baby sister sailing from Tilbury to arrive in Melbourne on Christmas Day.

Thus early perhaps was the wandering spirit of adventure planted in the boy's mind, in a soil able to offer it welcome and sustenance.

To his father, the Bishop of Tasmania, impressed as were all who met him by a most distinctive and sympathetic personality, had offered, after an acquaintance of a few hours, the charge of the district of Emu Bay including Burnie and Cape Town.

There for two years, with the magic of a new world about him, on the north coast of the island, with the warm blue waters of Bass's Strait at his feet, and the sombre fantasies of the mountains behind him, the boy grew, till in the spring of 1888, his father, knowing that his days were numbered, and longing to see England once more, brought his family home again, and died at Bournemouth on 31st August.

"Of him," writes one who knew him well, "you cannot speak too highly. He was very tall, a fine, open expression: absolutely truthful, earnest, and sincere, with a personality which was acknowledged by all who knew him." To his son, then but six years old, that charm of personality undoubtedly descended, though in his case it was latent for many years, suddenly to become apparent when his schooldays were almost done.

"*Serva fidem*" was the motto he inherited, a very Christian motto, and it served him as well for a *cri de guerre*; a cry which cost him his life, indeed, but which left him, dying, with no stain upon his arms, known still amongst the savage thousands who trusted him as the man who "kept faith" whatever it might cost him.



## CHAPTER II.

### MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE.

FOR two years after the family returned to England, Richard was at Canterbury where he went to a dame's school, spending his summer holidays with his mother's family in the valley of the Test.

In 1892 he went to "Spurlings," the well-known preparatory school, where in former days both his father and uncle had been tutors, and from Spurlings he entered Marlborough in 1896.

Of the three years that he spent there, little record remains outside his letters. Like many other men of marked character, his development appeared to be retarded by the formalism of a public school.

He was not at all the misunderstood genius who cannot find in the rough approximations of school life any niche that will suit him. On the contrary, it might have been considered that the commonplace of school convention suited him only too well.

He shook down into his place with great content. He thrust the other-boyish enthusiasms into his helm, he inscribed on his shield the school's ideals, and he appeared to be perfectly happy and content in the scope they afforded him. His letters home are alive with the gaiety of the game, whichever it was that might be in season. He chronicles eagerly the successes of any members of his house, indeed his letters are curiously secure from any hint of egoism, it is always someone else that he cares to celebrate.

His house was B. 2, whose badge is the Crescent, and he

is described by his house master as "a promising football player."

"He went into business," Mr. A. C. Champneys continues, "when he was barely 17, before there had been opportunity of seeing how he would have developed in a position of responsibility at school. He was not the sort of boy who (possibly from want of vitality or of a character of his own) 'never gave any trouble,' but he was sound in essential matters and was besides a lively and friendly person to have to do with. 'Business' was plainly not what he was made for; and I remember that very soon after he left he was very anxious to go out of England . . . having apparently some correct notion of the sort of life for which he was best fitted."

It is not difficult to glean a conception of his character from his schoolboy letters, and the impression they convey is altogether delightful. His devotion to his mother and increasing consideration for her remained as unaltered during his schooldays as in later life. "He shows a thoughtfulness for her which ■ altogether charming, and a concern for all things relating to her home life which is unusual for a boy, especially for a boy so completely wrapped up in the life about him."

"I am getting quite accustomed to it now," runs a letter soon after he went to Marlborough, "yet somehow I feel lonely and homesick, although I know heaps of fellows. Don't tell anyone this, please."

But he was too good a comrade to feel for long forlorn in a life especially friendly to good comradeship.

"I am into the swing of it now," he soon reported, "and am enjoying it thoroughly;" and later wrote, "I am enjoying myself immensely and feel thoroughly at home."

The life suited him so well, that though looking forward to the holidays, and counting the weeks till they came, he was continually deploring that the terms went so fast.

"The term has gone quickly; I've enjoyed it awfully. And a year later, "The time seems to have flown."

Many qualities which were to distinguish him later were obvious already. "I've never heard Dick Corfield grumble, or ever say an unkind word of anyone," said a comrade who had known him for years under trying conditions, and in all his schoolboy letters there is never a grumble uttered, though his circumstances placed many things out of his reach which he keenly desired, and never is there mention of anyone save in appreciation or with humour; and there is evidence too in the boy of the man who was never known to break his word, to white man or black, or to betray a friend.

He had been discovered in a too early indulgence in tobacco, but though the pipe was not his, he took all the blame for its possession, and accepted also the odium of having bought cigars for himself which had been purchased for another.

But he did not want his mother to suffer undue misgivings. "I will tell you," he explained, "that to-day in the morning I was out with a fellow and took two wiffs (only that, mind, on my honour)," but he added that it might look worse for him, because he couldn't give away the other fellow.

It is pleasant to notice in all his letters how entirely he trusted to his mother's comprehension of the demands of schoolboy honour, which is in its exactions quite as engaging a code as any other.

He was likewise convincingly sure that her interests would coincide with his, and sets out the details of matches on Upper and Lower, or the position in the field of the school fifteen, just as he might for his most intimate crony.

"I am trying to think of some news to tell you!" runs one of his letters. "Oh, I know something. We are going to play Liverpool on our ground to-morrow." And again, with reference to a house match in which they were left

"only 75 to win. But, if you'll only believe it, we have seven wickets down for only 50."

Though he loved football best, and enjoyed most the terms in which it was played, he could take quite a serious view of the importance of cricket.

"On Wednesday and Thursday," he writes, "we played Cheltenham at Cheltenham, and won by six wickets. Last year we won by nine wickets. I expect Uncle F. is sorry he did not send Fred here."

He chronicles his own performances, clearly most of all for his mother's benefit, and any items that concern them. "I have had my bat bound and pegged; it simply drives!"

He had been taught Association at Spurlings and had to learn Rugby at Marlborough, and a knowledge of that most excellent game was to serve him in good stead later: for when pursued in Somaliland by a wounded lion he managed by "handing it off" to secure the protection of a tree, though, from the lion having learnt to play the game with his teeth, he nearly sacrificed his arm to the manoeuvre.

But he found interests elsewhere than on the playing fields, as a boy with such latent tastes as were his was sure to.

"I have been twice more up in the Forest. It was lovely there; the cuckoos never stopped and the deer were all about."

"I don't know how many times I haven't been up to the Forest. The bracken fern is about three feet high."

"I have just been up for a walk in the Forest, along the grand avenue. Rather pretty just now in the autumn, although very cold up there."

The Forest served as a retreat on warm summer afternoons, "in a regular bower near the grand avenue," for small companies of congenial spirits with books and lemonade. This lemonade was probably of the variety compounded of gas, sugar and chemicals known to trainers under various unflattering appellations, but he gives an account with

picturesque appreciation of the "brewing" of a more wholesome sort. "To brew" has a peculiar Marlburian significance; to be asked out "to brew" means to be asked to tea, but the word covers other concoctions.

"We brew here; that is, somebody has a huge bowl and then we club together and subscribe towards the public fund . . . and buy lemons, and thus make lemonade in the bowl; then we have long glass tubes and suck and suck till it's all done. It's delicious with some biscuits. I'm a jolly good man at it. I've that reputation all ready." A slight uncertainty in the spelling of bowl, not reproduced here, adds an unconscious humour to the description.

The Forest served likewise for much bird-nesting, and he describes at length his captures to his mother, the list proving that no difficulties in the way of position were sufficient to daunt his intrepidity.

He joined the Natural History Society, "the ornithological branch; that is about birds," he explains, and was soon writing home for his "swaps." "Will you please send as many as you can without its being expensive, as I want them very badly."

The great egg question provides one quite delightful letter to his mother which one would like to quote in full.

"Take (or get them taken) out of the tin, send the tin back thank Tom very much and put the smashed eggs into the dust bin, but unwrap them well before you put them in then the good ones you must put them in a box not the box with the other eggs in but another one shut it up tight and string it then put it out of doors in the big box which the apples were put in, have that box shut and tell the children never to open it, mind have some soft stuff put in the inner box. There they will be safe neither will they rot or smell. Of course ■ you appreciate blowing the eggs of course you can as long as you don't break them and mind you make small holes to blow through but I fancy that ■ not your line so I think you had better keep to the first instruction, mind

you do that or else you will not be able to live in the house. Of course you might experiment in blowing them into a saucer in the dining room I mean kitchen when the kids have gone to bed and then the blown ones you can put in the box with the other blown ones. *But be very careful. . . .*

"P.S.—Do not forget to tell me how you are progressing with the eggs.

"P.P.S.—I shall be awfully anxious till I get letter."

His anxieties, however, could not even wait so long, for in a hurried pencil note, written evidently after a brief interval, he adds:

"Do not do as I told you in my last letter but you must *hard boil* the eggs then they do not smell and I have been recommended by a chap when I told him to do this as he says he always does instead of blowing them. But please attend to it yourself and be very careful. I shall expect a letter when you have hard boiled them on Wednesday."

The excitement of the subject was doubtless responsible for a certain parsimony in punctuation and a something occasionally ambiguous in the "instruction," for his letters were rather conspicuously clear and, for a boy of fourteen, surprisingly well ordered, and his phrases have frequently quite a fine sense of rhythm. "To-day was Trinity Sunday, so we had a Sunday half-holiday. Very nice it was." "I can swim now like anything; regular first-class champion at it."

There are constant touches illuminative of his character, thoughtful, candid, considerate.

"I am afraid you won't get this letter on Monday, as I have missed the post, but perhaps you won't mind ■ it's specially long, will you?"

"I know it ■ very wrong of me not to have written to Nita, but—well! I don't know how it was, especially as she has written to me twice."

"I have tried to make this letter long and don't think it

egotistical, as you said you wanted to know everything about myself."

"The chapel ■ simply lovely. I always like going into it."

His cheerful acceptance in one of his first letters of a somewhat meagre breakfast table was proof of how early he practised the art of making the best of things, a habit which notably distinguished him from even the most genial of grumblers.

"At breakfast you have entirely to look after yourself, as they only supply you with a small pat of butter. I feast on hot roll and butter and a cup of cocoa, which altogether costs one penny."

But he never thought of making such deficiencies a lever in his request for provisions, which was always constrained by a delicate sense of the difficulties in providing them, though he occasionally throws out a hint that, "A little potted meat would not be out of the way," or that "The blackberry jam is lasting out well," or the almost pathetic suggestion that, "In the summer with fruit, etc., it is always nice to feel you have a little money."

"Virtute, studio, ludo" is the school motto, and though work never appears to have been quite as congenial to him as either valour or games, he set himself, for his mother's sake, to study, reporting in one of his early letters: "I haven't got into any rows yet. I am high up in my Form and am trying to work hard;" and the only gloom that clouds his school letters falls from his failure to win a scholarship. He knew he had done his best, but that could not in the least console him for what he felt must be the blow to his mother.

In letter after letter he alludes with real grief and regret to his failure, not trying to excuse it, but conscious evidently that he was not good enough to win, and begging her to "write soon as I feel it very much because of your anxiety and disappointment," the thought of which had spoilt all

his joyous anticipation of the holidays which were so soon to follow.

It was mathematics, curiously enough, which always proved his undoing. "My mathematics still drag me back;" "Mathematics pull me down such a lot;" "My mathematics pulled me down as usual;" "At last I have got my promotion in mathematics," an event which he urged in conjunction with his not having "got into any rows this term," as furnishing an occasion for a little celebration.

In the letters there is much in filial and spiritual communion too intimate for quotation. What one has ventured to extract will give at any rate some conception of the boy's being—straight, simple, cheery, tender, entirely wholesome; fonder of games than of books, but too full of stuff to be an idler; with a healthy capacity for getting into rows and bearing, if anything, more than his share in the brunt of them; a fondness for nature; a rather exceptional measure of unselfishness, and a deep attachment to his home.

His great gift, the gift of character, was yet to germinate, and, as often happens, there was in consequence a certain immaturity about the rest of him. But that, on his leaving school, was very soon to be amended.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE CALL OF THE BLOOD.

CORFIELD left Marlborough at Easter 1899, spending three months of that summer at Boulogne to perfect himself in French. He had a distinct gift for languages, a faculty which was to prove of considerable value to him in Africa, where all real communion with the people of the country depends not only upon a knowledge of their tongue, but on an ability to appreciate the shape of their thought in it; African thought being not merely quite diverse in colour and character from that of Europeans, but altogether different in its dimensions, so that it lies in a greater variety of mental planes, and touches expectancies and apprehensions of which we have no experience. To gain some conception of these it is essential not only to understand or even speak the native tongue, which is not a difficult matter, but to be able to think in it; an aptitude which is not linguistic only, but depends on character; the white man being seldom fitted to conceive any intrinsic value in the black man's point of view. He may study it to learn how to deal with him, but not to understand his difficulties in dealing with himself.

Richard Corfield's gift for languages helped him to that other but far profounder gift for handling men of an alien and subject race, of which all who knew him spoke with such appreciation.

In the autumn of 1899 he went into business, an excellent post being given him in the Liverpool Shipping Office by his uncle, T. Fenwick Harrison; and there appeared to be an assured and orderly future before him.

But the times were ill-suited to such assurances. He had been but a few months in his uncle's office when war was declared in South Africa, and every heart like his in England responded to the pulse of it with a quickened beat. He was still but a boy of seventeen, but he had shed already the schoolboy's undistinguished chrysalis, and suddenly, as a girl changes into a woman, he was become a man.

One who only saw him at intervals describes the change as altogether amazing. He had, almost beyond recognition, come into his own. The schoolboy's genial slouch had straightened to an assured carriage; he had grown nearly to his full height, broadened, deepened, taken possession. He was to change still: the South African days were to put a firmness and competence into his movement, and from that was to develop the slow appraising humour that marked his later years.

But that leap out of boyhood had altered all his outlook. He was gone into business, but he had left his heart on the other side of the door.

Those melancholy months at the close of 1899, when this country woke for a brief while from its perennial dream of all-sufficing competence to a consciousness of its shortcomings, had dropped a new ferment into his being.

The country had received a shock which affected it more profoundly than anything since the Indian Mutiny; there was a stirring in it of the old impulse to valour and self-sacrifice which had seemed quite overgrown by the mould of commercialism, and it was inevitable that a soul so exceptionally compact of those virtues should have responded to the impulse with an energy almost beyond his own control.

Had there been no war to startle England, the issue for Richard Corfield would not have been altered. He was made of stuff that does not thrive in offices, that cannot, indeed, live there, and his craving for the open road and the wide horizon would have led him, as inevitably as the

glamour of war, a little later, perhaps, but just as surely out into the wilderness on the trail of adventure.

But the steadiness of purpose which was always his, sufficed in those unsettling months to keep him in the place which had been so fortunately provided for him, and he watched the hurried exit of incompetence for Cape Town without a hint that he was longing to be allowed to join it.

In the following summer, hoping perhaps that his regiment might be sent abroad, he joined the Volunteers and was camped on Salisbury Plain for his training. The Plain had not then been robbed of its inspirations, and those, with the first taste of a soldier's life, proved too much even for Richard Corfield's determination to do the work to his hand.

There was in that brief experience illumination enough to show him that his hand was not shaped for the work that had been offered it, and that in commerce his character could never find an adequate employment.

He put before his mother these new-found convictions, and it was natural that she felt mistrust in accepting them at his age as representing a sufficiently settled aspiration to rule his life. She took rooms in Liverpool to be near him, to talk out with him unhurriedly all that the change might mean, and judge how fully it was likely to fulfil his more mature desires. All his family were strongly opposed to his abandonment of a future, so seemingly assured, for the very uncertain profits of a life of adventure, and the fact that others were dependent on his welfare was a lever which exerted a very great pressure on a nature as loyal and tender as his.

Only an overwhelming sense of his own absolute incapacity for office work could have overridden such considerations. Those who were with him in his uncle's office can still remember how he fought with the slow fire that burned him during that first year of bondage. From the first sailing of troops for Cape Town he seemed able to

think of nothing else but the far-away fortune of our arms. He lived not in Liverpool, but in some lonely camp upon the field. He heard not the whistle of traffic upon the river, but of bullets above his craved-for comrades' heads. The returns deeply printed upon his mind were not of shipping, but of the dead and wounded. It was immensely to the credit of such an eager soul, that with all the country ringing, as it had not rung for fifty years with the alarms of war, with deeds of self-sacrifice daily before his eyes, and men reaping in a few glorious months the honours ■ a lifetime, he sat quietly at the desk he loathed and shouldered the task for which he knew himself unfitted, and that only when all the glamour had been worn off the struggle, when excited expectations had given place to boredom, and the heroes of the earlier combats had returned home to be acclaimed and fêted, did he allow himself to urge seriously the call of his blood.

It was not long before his mother realised how completely every instinct of his being was involved in it, and that to refuse her favour might prove fatal to all the greatness in him which she felt.

But she wisely made a condition of her assent that he should only go out to South Africa as the member of some corps.

Having won his mother over, Richard Corfield did not give a thought to any other consideration. The enrolment of the Baden-Powell Police Force was then taking place, and Richard at once began to fit himself for the tests which were required of candidates for enlistment. He spent every moment out of office hours in learning his drill, and took riding lessons in order to pass in horsemanship. For this test, while still very much of a novice, he had to go to the Cavalry Barracks in York, and was one of the first batch of eight to be tried in the Riding School. When it came to jumping, the other seven managed to get their horses over, but Corfield's mount persistently refused.

"Get her over, my lad, get her over," urged the riding master.

"Give me your whip and I will," said Corfield, and get her over he did.

A greater difficulty presented itself in a near-sightedness which had compelled him when at school to wear spectacles. Good sight was demanded of all recruits, and he set himself to teach his eyes their business without the aid of glasses. He manufactured a series of cards with letters and print of different types and sizes, practised assiduously the reading of them at varying distances, and succeeded in spite of his myopia in passing the tests.

This gift of concentration on an objective, rather remarkable in a boy, always distinguished him. When in South Africa he did, what with so many others remained but a good intention, set himself to acquire a real working knowledge of Dutch, that rather depressing language, and ended by speaking it admirably: and what he had done with Dutch he achieved with various native languages, passing several examinations with distinction. This determination to fit himself for his work as thoroughly as possible was shown when he was at home on furlough from Nigeria in 1912. At a time when a man might be forgiven the fullest use of his relaxation after years spent in the wilds, he refused all invitations which would take him out of reach of London during a course of lectures on Muhammadan law which he was attending at the Imperial Institute. He was expecting at that time to return to Northern Nigeria, and knew that a close acquaintance with the code administered in the Alkalis' Courts, would be of priceless value in dealing with the Muslim population which might fall to his charge.

Shortly after his enlistment in the Baden-Powell Police, Richard Corfield sailed for South Africa in December 1900. His whole possessions were his personality and the £10 in his pocket, but his radiant face showed no doubt of their

sufficiency as he waved a last farewell from the *Oratava*, which was taking out the first consignment of two hundred recruits to the Cape.

He had felt, even in the brief experience of fitting himself for the new routine, that he had come into his own. ■ was sheer joy to leave the cramped life of cities behind him to launch out into the unknown, and with assured conviction he told his mother that he would make his own way in the world and never cost her a penny, a promise which he not only faithfully kept, but in six years' time he was able to commence the contributions which were continued until his death.

## PART II.—THE LIFE OF ADVENTURE.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### WINDING UP THE WAR.

CORFIELD'S capacity for making the best of everything began to assert itself in his first days of service. Many of the impromptus that one can endure cheerfully on shore, become irritating discomforts on shipboard, and everything in the nature of an impromptu, including the two hundred recruits, appeared to have been stowed away on the *Oratava*, except the order and discipline which alone enable the distracting tangle of insufficiencies and superfluities to be endured.

Rough winter weather and the unseaworthiness of most of the youngsters added to the exactions and the confusion, but the worst miseries of seafaring could not cloud Corfield's delighted anticipation of the life ahead of him, and no one can remember him in a gloomy moment during that arduous voyage.

There was in his nature a curious and most attractive deficiency; he seemed quite without man's natural inclination to look after himself. It had not at all the effect of unselfishness: there was that about it more primarily delightful. It was not that he put things from him for other men's benefit, though he could do that too: he simply did not bother about himself at all, and took what came with a complete indifference, not only as to how it might affect him but as to how he might possibly have affected it. It was not alone that he did not seek the "uppermost rooms at feasts," but he would scarcely have noticed, and certainly

never have minded, had he been offered the lowliest. He was quite destitute of self-seeking, but there was more in his suavity than that; he was quite unaware of his destitution. Some men crowd the personal element out of their lives by an intense interest in others. Richard Corfield's was not crowded out, but it was reduced to insignificance by the wide sweep of his horizon. It was this entire absence of even permissible push which most distinguished him from and most endeared him to his fellows. An unselfish man is often a little trying as a contrast, but a man who does not know where his self is seems just a delightful and ridiculous miracle which one only wants to love and live with.

Though he was but eighteen, an age at which most boys are still at school, and one of the youngest of that ship-load of adventurers, he was at once made an acting corporal, and thus from the first began to taste the responsibility which he so much desired, and the weight of which always seemed to lighten him.

There was plenty of hard work on the way out, for not only had the men to learn the elements of drill, but they had to be taught soldierly methods and manners, which are hard to compass at the outset in a confined space, and Corfield began his work at a disadvantage, for having been one of the first to offer himself for the then very experimental enteric inoculation, was as a consequence extremely ill for some days.

At Cape Town the equipment of the draft was completed, in a less haphazard fashion than had been usual in the earlier days of the war, but the equestrian experience to which all the men had been looking eagerly forward, had to be confined to cleaning their saddles, as the wherewithal to fill them was not forthcoming, the awful wastage in horse flesh still continuing at the front.

The long train journey, day after day in crowded carriages under the hottest sun of the South African summer, without any of the usual contrivances for rendering it



endurable, proved unequal to the task of ruffling Corfield's temper, and when, on reaching Modderfontein, the eager young soldiers, instead of being sent out at once into the field, as they expected, to fight the Boers, were set to work to throw up earthworks about the dynamite factory, and kept at navy's work for a whole fortnight, he shouldered a spade and shifted earth from the trenches as though that had been the very thing for which he had come to South Africa.

"He did everything," writes one of his comrades of that time, "as if it was just the thing he liked doing best," and the description continued to apply to everything that his hand found to do. He did it with all the joy of his might. "He was a fine young fellow," writes one of his earlier commanding officers, "esteemed and liked by all," and when remounts at last arrived, and Corfield was made a lance-corporal in charge of one of the squads of six men into which the troop was divided, there were many more than six who wanted to serve under him.

The real work of learning their business now began, and Corfield, who was at that time a very moderate horseman, set himself in his steady determined fashion to learn everything that a riding master could teach him. Despite the deficiencies of his seat he was absolutely fearless, and always ready to try conclusions with the roughest and worst mannered of the remount sweepings, and it was not long before he was regarded as the best and most daring rider in the troop. "I remember Corfield, who had no experience in that line," writes Mr. H. Dene, who served for many months with him, "taking five falls in about ten minutes, and yet continue undaunted to remount."

From Modderfontein the force moved to Johannesburg and Pretoria, which became its headquarters, and thence to Klepfontein, where it came for the first time under fire, having several skirmishes with the Boers.

At Klepfontein, Corfield was entrusted with much

scouting work, and his squad obtained a reputation for acquiring not only a good deal of information about the enemy, but a good deal else of what belonged to him, any especially savoury odour in camp being always, and as a rule accurately, referred to "Corfield's cooker."

It is much to be regretted that it is quite impossible to trace the gradual influence upon Corfield's character of these five years in South Africa. He wrote to his mother by almost every mail, and, as his habit was, told her everything that was happening to him, and offered his frequently illuminating views of the life about him. But none of these letters are still in existence, and there remain but a very few, written to his sister, which naturally omit everything he had already said, and illustrate rather the side of him that was always interested in the gossip of home and the doings of people he had left behind him. There is only one such letter to cover the first year of his service, and all it says is, "I like it immensely being out here: it is grand, and I only wish I had come out a bit earlier." He was then not quite nineteen.

When the hard scouting work had proved too much for the condition of the horses, Corfield's troop was sent to do a rest cure in blockhouses, though from the man's point of view the blockhouse life provided a maximum of monotony with a minimum of repose, since, though there was nothing to do, there was a great deal to expect, and expectation is really more tiring when nothing comes of it, as there is no natural release of the tension. In the blockhouse, too, there was no scope for the squad's free-booting abilities, and they found the diet dull and meagre now that it could no longer be supplemented from the enemy's larder. Quaker oats and ration biscuits, and not too much of either, compared most unsexually with mealie-fed fowls, which lost their way with such suspicious frequency and seemed indeed only able to find it with anything like certainty to some Yeoman's saddle-bow.

After its rest cure the troop was moved to Roodsvaal, and then had its first real taste of war. There was not much ordered fighting, the Boer was too elusive, and had nothing to gain by standing up to be hit; but for that very reason all the more work was thrown on the men who were out to keep an eye upon him.

Since that was the thing to which the enemy most objected, it became the very thing hardest to do; and there was always enough of occasional music in the air from his bullets to make the doing of it exciting. There was a shortage of men, and a still greater shortage of horses, and those that were fit and available were worked to the limit of what they could endure. The men used to fall asleep upon their horses and the horses to nod occasionally under the men. At nineteen one can stand up to a good deal, and the incessant strain and grind of it soundly grounded Corfield in the principles of scouting. The work of his squad had been so successful, that his little band was used as a pawn for many a mission on which the bigger force that should have performed it could not be risked, and his capacity was so well recognised, and his counsel so tactfully given, that when working with the troop he became its virtual leader. His squad, after spending the day in a long vain search for a possibly hypothetical enemy, would frequently, on returning to camp, be sent out to watch a drift, or keep an eye on a suspected farmhouse. On one occasion, after a night on picket, and a day spent chasing a false alarm, the squad returned at dark to be at once detailed to watch a farmhouse near a drift a few miles from the lines and capture any one who tried to use it. There were only three men in the squad still able to keep awake, and, taking these, Corfield started off into the fog that was beginning to enfold the river, and headed for the farm, the position of which was well known to him. The nearest road there led twice across the winding river, and, feeling their way cautiously through the blinding mist, the

little party got safely over two drifts and disposed itself about the approaches to the dark mass which they could see in the mist ahead of them. Half-frozen by their almost motionless vigil in the fog, soaked to the skin by their double crossing of the river, their nerves strained by the long intent hours without sleep or food, dawn revealed them, not about the house they imagined themselves to be guarding, but in front of a ruined Kaffir hut some five hundred yards from their own camp. They had crossed the river twice by the same drift, and returned to their starting-point. But the mist served the Boers equally unkindly, and, wading twice more through the icy river, they arrived in time to prevent any communication with the house.

Such was a sample of the life they led in those lingering days of the war, with no great battles to bring renown, but never safe from a sniping bullet; on trek, outpost, picket, patrol, no intermittence for a moment; a night unbroken and a full meal only every now and then; the kind of life to make a man or to unmake him. It made Richard Corfield. He learnt from it the quiet acceptance of all sorts of fortune, the strength of smiling fortitude, and the stiff finish which a steady persistence wins. Before the year was out, and while he was still in his teens, he was acting orderly-sergeant and squadron leader, and it was only his youth which stood in the way of even more rapid promotion.

He had learnt to be a good horse-master, and saw to it that his men's first care was for the beasts that carried them. Already that fairness of judgment, which was to win him such influence in Somaliland, had been recognised, and he became the accepted arbiter in all disputes. "I never knew him to grumble or to do anyone an unkindness in all those years," writes one who served under him. "He never asked any man to do more than he was able, or 'rowed' him ■ he failed. He seemed to think that all of us were always trying to do our best, and perhaps that made us." Very likely it did.

Many years later, when someone wondered what he could see in Somalis: "I see what I get out of them," was Corfield's reply. He was always thinking the best of a man, and, by looking to get it out of him, often showed the man something that had been unsuspected by himself.

In 1901 he saw a lot of fighting in the Magaliesberg, and spent his spare time in breaking in remounts, an occupation which gave a last finish to his horsemanship.

The guerilla warfare of those days was just what suited him. He was indeed exactly of the type we needed to counter the Boera. His mind had still its boyish lissomness, unshaped and unstiffened by professional training. He thought out the tasks set him as a boy thinks out a game, from both sides at once, which was how the Boer thought them out.

The professional soldier is apt to think things out according to the accepted rulings, and if he gives a thought to his adversaries' point of view, to imagine it as conditioned by the same considerations as his own.

Corfield's mind was as untrained as the Boer's, and it was just as lively, so that when he guessed at what his opponent might be thinking he generally guessed right. He had some close shaves in those days, but his quick thinking and natural aptitude for guerilla fighting always enabled him to get his men away safely, and on several occasions to outwit and capture the men who were trying to round him up.

In June 1902 he was recommended for a commission in the Constabulary, when barely twenty; but the authorities, who did not know how matured was the head upon his shoulders, thought him to be too young.

Six months later he was again strongly recommended, but he had then been for some time in charge of a post far away from everywhere, was literally reduced to rags, which he was unable to replace, and was too ashamed of his appearance to come in to more civilised parts to pass his examination.

"This ■ a terrible month out here," he wrote from Middleburg in August, "nothing but cold gales of wind, day and night, and the dust-storms here are too awful for words; you can't see an inch in front of you sometimes, so you can imagine that it's not very jolly in tents."

The life did not suit him so well when the war was over; nothing, indeed, could have offered a drearier contrast to the life he had been leading than the sudden stagnation of clearing up after Vereeniging, with the sense of being left stranded as the tide of armed men receded from the country.

He wrote from Van Dyke's Drift in March 1903: "I think of trying South America: Colombia, Ecuador, or somewhere; there is always a revolution going on there."

In February 1904 he was promoted to be sergeant in the Northern Division of the South African Constabulary and was transferred to Pietersburg from Belfast, where he had reported himself as still under canvas and enduring "bitter weather, every one in their tents under ten blankets," and "yards of rain every day." In that year the reduction of the Constabulary began, and there was no further chance of promotion.

He was kept busily employed in 1904 on the Census, visiting every house and farm in the Zoutpansberg district.

After that the routine work was resumed at Pietersburg, and in the following year at Cypherfontein in the Waterburg district, with a break for the annual musketry training at Nylstroom.

At Cypherfontein, fifty miles from the line, he reached the extreme of isolation from the world, and his mind was made up that South Africa had very little more to offer any one like himself in search of a future.

"I have fully determined," he wrote in April 1905, "to leave the Police out here, because although you could not wish for a jollier, healthier, or easier life,—and I like it immensely,—what I look at is that it leads to nothing; even, say, if you stay on and rise to the top, District Commandant,

## ■ RICHARD CORFIELD OF SOMALILAND

say at £700, there ■ nothing in it; you cannot save on your pay, whatever your rank, and there is no pension. I should advise any young fellow out of a billet in England to join for three or four years; it would rub the edge off him and wake him up, but not to make a profession of it."

So in July, taking his £60 bonus and his six months' leave on full pay, he turned his face towards home, after his first spell of adventure, but doubtfully, understanding himself sufficiently well to know that no occupation would be to his taste that he could find in England, and being reluctant to waste on a mere holiday the little money he had saved, since, living for five years in uniform, he was not even possessed of a suit of clothes.

He had inclinations towards both South America and Japan, but in the end decided to return to England to see if some place could not be found for him in one of her possessions.

## **PART III.—THE HORN OF AFRICA.**

### **CHAPTER V.**

#### **THE MULLAH.**

It is in Berbera that the monument to Richard Corfield's gallantry will stand, and with Somaliland his name will be indelibly connected. Therefore it behoves every one who takes an interest in what he did there, to have some understanding of what there was to do.

That might seem a truism, but there is a reason why one must consider it as something more. Many good soldiers have found their way to Somaliland, fought their fight and gone their way, with the medal on their breasts—all they cared to remember of its problems and its people. But Richard Corfield was made differently, and differently served by fate.

He was a political and not a combatant officer, and, though born with a special aptitude for leadership, and having in South Africa acquired considerable skill in all the finesse in reconnaissance and manœuvre which goes to the winning of guerilla warfare, the work by which he was especially distinguished in the Horn of Africa was not combatant, and his energies were far less absorbed in active operations than in promoting good feeling between its nomad tribes, and rendering them capable of self-protection from Dervish interference. To be thus rather interested in settlement than in conquest, allied his mind with all that was stable and productive in the country and made the welfare of its inhabitants his supreme concern.

His point of view was, in consequence, altogether different



from the soldier's, and, though he died a soldier's death, ■ was in an effort to protect the people in his care from harm and to fulfil the obligations with which he was charged towards them.

We must therefore think of him, not, as one might be tempted, in connection with punitive expeditions and military achievements, but as a factor in the settlement of a country too long distracted by internal discords, and by the vacillations of the power to which it looked, and with every reason, for support and protection.

Also, since the action which led to his death was dictated, not by any martial desire for distinction, but by the assurance of its necessity for the welfare of the country, an assurance founded upon years of sympathetic experience, the power to appreciate the reasons by which he was moved can only be derived from an acquaintance with the conditions from which they proceeded. That ■ to say, if we are to understand Richard Corfield's action we must obtain some knowledge of the circumstances by which that action was induced; we must try to realise the impression Somaliland made upon him.

To that end it will be necessary to look back a little over the events which immediately preceded his arrival in the country to take part in a scheme which had been just devised for its administration.

Our responsibility for Somaliland dates from 1884.

Egypt had ruled there for some fifteen years previously, a sovereignty which, subject to certain conditions, we had recognised; but events in the Sudan led, in 1884, to the withdrawal from it of the Egyptian garrison, and, at the close of that year and the beginning of the next, Zeila and Berbera were occupied by British troops, and treaties were concluded with all the tribes, except the Warsangli, who were included later, and the Dolbahanta, promising British protection on the understanding that no assistance was to be rendered to our enemies in the Sudan.

This beginning of things should be noted, since there appears to be an impression that it was pure altruism that took us into the country. It was nothing of the sort. We went into it, as we go into most places, in pursuit of our own interests. We promised the boon of British protection ■ those interests were furthered. They were, and we were thus made debtors to the country for the fulfilment of our pledge, and for the next twenty-five years we did try, if not always wisely, to redeem it. Owing to the lapses in wisdom, and that periodic penuriousness to which as a commercial nation we are so liable, the redemption has cost us not a few lives and a good deal of money, and the country has in consequence come to be considered one of those profitless appurtenances of empire of which, if we could, we would be rid to-morrow, and the *Regio Aromatifera* of the ancients has become a very evil-scented region in certain political nostrils.

Any one, however, who wishes to understand the part it played in Richard Corfield's life, and the share it had in his death, must try to realise what happened to the country shortly before he went to it, and in the period between his two visits, because those events made a deep impression upon his mind, and thus, surely not unreasonably, affected his actions.

To begin with, two quite different propositions must be recognised: Somaliland with and without the Mullah.

From 1885, when a British Protectorate was established over the Somali Coast, till 1899, when Muhammad-bin-Abdullah made his first predatory appearance, the only problem of the country was to keep peace between the tribes and improve facilities for commerce.

In these years there were four expeditions: in 1886 and 1890 against the Isa, in 1893 against the Aidagalla, and in 1895 against the Rer Hared; small affairs, all of them—that of 1890 alone of more than 300 men; the entire garrison of the country only amounting to 240, all

of them natives, 25 being Somali Camel Corps, and 95 Somali Police.

The proposition was thus obviously a simple one, and the prosperity of the country steadily increased, and in 1898 its administration was transferred from the Government of India to the Foreign Office.

The change thus closely coincided with the baleful appearance of the Mullah, to whom most of the consequent trouble must be ascribed, save in so far as his very existence as a bane may be attributed to our famous clemency, which allows to the native a seditious licence, seldom attributed by him to the noble sentiments of democracy and the foolish ignorance of race that prompt it.

Muhammad Abdullah began his seditious career in Berbera in 1895. He is supposed to have been born some thirty years earlier, and had probably knocked about the world like most Somali boys, to Aden and along the Arabian coast; to Cairo and Alexandria, probably, in days when there was much talk in the bazars of the Muslim revival; still farther, possibly on some British ship, for the Somali wanders three-parts round the world; and at last to Mecca, where he sat at the feet and imbibed the teaching of Muhammad Saleh. It was on his return from Mecca that he began to preach in Berbera. At first he seemed inspired by a genuine passion for the faith, and the easy-going Islamism of the coastal tribes offered ample opportunity for rebuke.

But it is difficult to preach the pure faith of the Prophet to a people under foreign rule without saying something detrimental to the foreigner. Sedition soon supplied the pith of his exhortations, and in our British fashion we took no more notice than to tell him not to make a fool of himself.

As he could move neither us nor his own people on the Coast, he went inland to his tariga in the Dolbahanta, with one of whose sub-tribes he has intermarried, and his

remarkable character began very soon to assert itself. Remarkable one must surely count the man who in little more than ten years, poor, alone, and unassisted, and with, for his material, ill-armed tribesmen who had never recognised a common aim, turned the greatest world-power out of one of its possessions. How he did it no man can say. The power of Islam was behind him; he stood for the faith, and the might of faith doubtless worked the miracle. He first acquired influence by putting an end to inter-tribal fighting, and then began to unite the tribes in a religious movement with the promise of loot as an attractive accessory. Likewise he expounded and enforced the law in its most literal and determined meaning, with all its latent prophetic ferocity.

"If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee!" There was to be no faltering. The thief lost his right hand for the first offence, his left foot for the second. Lips, ears, eyelids—no member was so needful nor so sacred but a man might forfeit it if he broke the law. In Berbera and in Burao men were to be seen mutilated with an unmentionable barbarity, yet still serving the Mullah. It was the power of Islam, backed by the grim spectres of cruelty and superstition.

Death was the reward of even trivial disobedience—the death of the offender, frequently of his whole family, and sometimes a hundred of his tribe as well. "Remove him from my sight," was the fatal formula, the official executioner adding any incidental barbarities that might occur to him. Mutilations were carried out in the Mullah's presence, whatever was left of the limb being dipped in boiling ghi. Sixty-three men of the Dolbahanta were murdered on suspicion of an intention to leave him; and 300 women whom he accused of being "unwilling to pray." Even animals and inanimated things did not escape his reforming fury. A group of native huts or a herd of camels were equally liable to destruction for having "gone wrong."

It was not for nothing that he was dubbed "Mad" by the people who suffered him, though they saw in his madness the Divine inspiration. He believed in God, he knew not fear, and cared for no man; those were his qualities, and they carried him far.

His first belligerent appearance was at Burao early in 1899, after raiding the Habr Yunis, and he declared there his intention of ruling the interior. After returning to Bohotleh, he again swept through Burao in August with 5000 men and marched northward to Upper Sheikh. His appearance at the head of the pass by which the caravan route runs for a short fifty miles to Berbera caused a scare in the capital. Warships were hurried across from Aden, and the Mullah, watching from that great scarp of rock their search-lights sweep across the maritime plain, declared them to be the eyes of God unveiled to welcome him. "A good digestion," as George Herbert has it, "turneth all to health." But he had sense enough to attract from the Divinity no warmer welcome. Next year he raided the Ogaden and with 6000 men attacked the Abyssinians in Jigjiga, being repulsed with a loss of 2600. His defeat did him little harm, and six weeks later he was pouring across the Haud, driving before him the tribes which had trusted to our protection, and, turning about, flung his force against the Abyssinians at Harrhe, capturing at each swoop vast quantities of stock with which he retired to the malarious Ogaden country, where no one was inclined to follow him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FOUR EXPEDITIONS.

WITH the Mullah's power thus objectionably declared we were forced to assert ourselves.

In November 1900, at the instance of the Consul-General, as our representative in Berbera was then called, an expedition was determined on to cope with the offender.

In order to illustrate the conditions obtaining in the country, which Richard Corfield was expected to keep in order by the mere passing shadows of 100 men, it will be useful to give a brief summary of the expeditions sent against the Mullah during the next four years.

There were, first of all, the two Anglo-Abyssinian Expeditions in 1901. The first started in January, was composed of 10,000 men, and marched into Ogaden; but owing to defective supply and water difficulties, was forced to halt at Gerlogubi, not having met the Mullah.

The second, of 14,000 men with 2 British officers, started in May, marched by Gerlogubi to Galadi and Bur, and, after suffering great hardships from lack of food and water, returned to Harrar in July, having accomplished nothing but a little raiding.

The British Expedition under Lieut.-Colonel E. J. E. Swayne, with which the Abyssinians were to co-operate, began to recruit in November 1900, was composed of 1000 men with a mounted corps of 500. It concentrated at Hargeisa and Adadleh, then moved to Burao, and on 22nd May, being delayed by the lateness of the rains, to Ber and Eil Dab, sixty-five miles beyond it. After some raiding, a mobile column of 950 men

advanced on 1st June to Beretabli, leaving 370 rifles, one Maxim and 90 spearmen with surplus transport and 3500 looted camels in double zariba at Samala under Captain M'Neill. On 2nd June this post was attacked by 3000 Dervishes, and on the next day by 5000 Dervishes under the Mullah in person. Both attacks were beaten off with a dead loss to the enemy of over 300 men, and to the defenders of ten killed and eight wounded.

The two columns rejoined at Lassader, and, making forced marches, raided 14,000 camels, 1000 cattle, and 30,000 sheep of the offending tribes and occupied their chief watering-places.

Meanwhile the Mullah had rallied his following, and Colonel Swayne, marching rapidly from Bohotleh, attacked him at dawn on 17th July at Ferdiddin, with a force of 600 rifles, 75 mounted, and 400 Mahmud Gerad horse. The issue was doubtful at first, and the Tribal Horse bolted, but the enemy was finally driven off and pursued for five miles. But lack of water and consideration for his wounded forced Colonel Swayne to retire to Burao where the force was disbanded; garrisons being maintained at Burao, Sheikh, and Adadleh. The enemy was estimated to have lost 1200 in killed and wounded during the operations, and 800 prisoners were taken. The British loss was one officer and 23 other ranks killed, and one officer and 26 others wounded.

These defeats, such as they were, had no effect on the Mullah. He was raiding again by the end of December, and in January was within twenty-five miles of Burao, committing atrocities on men, women and children, and looting vast quantities of stock, some of which was recovered by the infantry levies left at Burao which started in pursuit. A force of local levies was hurriedly organised by Colonel Swayne, and on the 1st June there was a force of 1200 infantry, 50 mounted infantry, and 20 camel corps with three Maxims and two 7-pounders at Wadamago; 400

mounted infantry and camel corps, and 50 infantry between Burao and Wadamago, a garrison of 150 infantry with one Maxim and a 7-pounder at Burao, and a tribal force of 450 rifles between Darror and Bohotleh. The Mullah was reported to have 12,000 mounted and 3000 foot-men.

Leaving a garrison of 200 men in Bohotleh, Colonel Swayne marched by Damot to the Nogal Valley, where he remained, successfully raiding unfriendly tribes till September, the Mullah sitting all the while near Mudug on the opposite side of the waterless Haud. On 2nd October, Colonel Swayne with 1500 riflemen advanced from the Nogal Valley by the Jidbaran Pass, learning from spies that the Mullah was at Erigo. The force came unexpectedly on the enemy shortly after dawn on 6th October in dense bush. Thanks mainly to Colonel Swayne's ability in handling his men in a most difficult position, the enemy was driven off with an estimated loss of about 150 riflemen and many others killed, but the British force lost, besides a Maxim, two officers and 99 men killed, and two officers and 84 men wounded, the force being so shaken that it had to retire to Bohotleh, the commander expressing his conviction that "even with protracted training most Somalis would be deeply impressed by the Mullah's name and could not in close fighting be relied upon."

In 1902 a fresh expedition under Brigadier-General W. H. Manning was decided upon, the force, numbering 4000 men, being divided into two columns: one under the Brigadier, containing about 500 mounted and 1500 unmounted men, starting from Obbia in Italian territory; another with about 660 infantry and 200 cavalry and mounted infantry, marching from Bohotleh; a third, Abyssinian, column starting from Harrar, with the intention of squeezing the Mullah in the Mudug country between the three.

The garrison at Bohotleh, with the wounded from Erigo, left there on Colonel Swayne's retirement, and in dire straits from famine and fever, had first to be relieved by the



flying column under Colonel Cobbe, which then withdrew to Garrero, waiting the advance from Obbia, which commenced on 22nd February 1903, the advance guard reaching Galkayu on 3rd March, where it was joined next day by the mounted troops of the flying column under Major Kenna, the entire Obbia force concentrating there by 25th March.

Communication with Bohotleh was soon established, and a force of 250 men and two camel guns under Colonel Plunkett, who had in the interim scored several minor successes, convoyed 1000 camels from that place, reaching Galkayu on 25th March. Next day, with his transport thus improved, General Manning advanced with 280 mounted and 800 unmounted men to Galadi, which was reached on 31st, finding the wells occupied by Major Kenna's force, and that the enemy had retired.

Reconnaissances sent out on 1st and 2nd April under Colonel Plunkett and Colonel Cobbe captured many thousands of stock and killed 100 of the enemy, and on 10th April Colonel Cobbe advanced in pursuit of the Mullah with two camel guns and 400 men, being joined three days later by 50 British and Boer mounted infantry. The enemy was met near Gumburu, and after skirmishes on 15th and 16th April, on 17th two companies of the King's African Rifles and 50 men of the 2nd Sikhs with two Maxims under Colonel Plunkett came into contact with the full strength of the enemy, consisting of 2000 horsemen and 10,000 spearmen.

After fighting magnificently, the British force, its ammunition exhausted, was overwhelmed, only 41 men re-joining Colonel Cobbe's column, of whom but 11 were un-wounded; our loss being 8 British officers and over 200 men.

Three days later the Bohotleh column, some 500 strong, under Major Gough, reached Danop, 45 miles from Gumburu, ignorant of the disaster. On the way to Daratoleh the

mounted men under Major Gough, numbering about 200, were attacked, and after several hours severe fighting forced to retire to Danop; losing 2 officers and 13 men killed and 4 officers and ■ men wounded.

After these two defeats, the worst that had ever been inflicted upon a British force in Somaliland, General Manning, falling back, moved across the Haud to Bohotleh, which was reached on 26th June. The Mullah, feeling the pressure of the Abyssinians, crossed our frontier between Bohotleh and Damot and entered the Nogal with the whole of his following.

So in the most unsatisfactory manner the campaign ended, the most disastrous that had befallen the British arms.

It was obvious that such a termination could not be accepted, and Major-General Sir Charles Egerton was at once instructed to organise a new expedition. Reinforcements consisting of 300 British infantry, an Indian infantry regiment 700 strong, and 300 Indian mounted infantry, were dispatched to the scene of action, and India furnished also transport animals, camels, and mules, as well as many staff and departmental officers. Two corps of local irregulars—the Gadaburai Horse and the Tribal Horse—were also recruited, as well as a corps of Illaloes, or irregular mounted scouts. General Egerton arrived at Berbera on 3rd July 1903, and expectations for starting the campaign continued for some time to be falsified. The size of the force, 8000 strong, necessitated preparations never before attempted, and its composition, including British troops, increased these by geometrical progression.

Co-operation with Abyssinia was to furnish a stop to the Mullah's movement to the south, but this fell through owing to difficulties of transport, and the British force had in the end to furnish both the beaters and the guns.

The Mullah being still in the Nogal Valley, it was determined to strengthen and provision the line from

Sheikh by Burao to Bohotleh, still held by General Manning's force, and throw forward to Galadi a post still farther to the south. Then, with the Mullah's retirement towards the Webi Shabeli barred, to drive him north-east from the Nogal Valley against the waterless Sorl.

The Mullah was believed to have with him some 1500 to 1800 riflemen, 4000 ponies, and 15,000 spearmen. The British force was divided into two Brigades; the First, under Brigadier-General Manning, had its headquarters at Burao; the Second, under Brigadier-General C. G. M. Fasken, with headquarters at Lower Sheikh; the lines of communication from Berbera to Bohotleh being under Colonel Swann. A flying column, organised from the First Brigade, was at Wadamago. When the First Brigade concentrated at Bohotleh, the Second moved to Eil Dab and Wadamago, and on 11th November General Manning, preceded by Colonel Kenna with 300 mounted troops, moved to Galadi, established a post there, and returned to Bohotleh on 24th November after a most exhausting march and a brief brush with the Mullah's men.

On 19th December Colonel Kenna located the Dervish main body at Jidbali after a sharp fight, and General Egerton, recalling the Galadi garrison, moved the First Brigade into the Nogal, the Second Brigade and mounted troops remaining at Eil Dab.

On 9th January a general forward move was made, and on the 10th the enemy, about 5000 strong with 500 horsemen, was encountered at Jidbali. The Dervishes charged the British square but were driven back in confusion, and Colonel Kenna, handling admirably his very mixed command, followed their retirement for three hours.

The enemy lost some 1000 killed, 200 prisoners, and 400 rifles; the British force, 3 officers and 21 men killed, and 9 officers and 25 men wounded.

Victory was complete, but unfortunately only a portion of the Mullah's army had been engaged, and an advance

against the remainder had to be delayed for two days during which the Mullah escaped by the Anane Pass to the Sorl.

The two brigades swept through the Nogal Valley capturing quantities of stock, but seeing no sign of an opponent.

In March the First Brigade held the Nogal Valley as a stop to the south, while the Second with a mounted column swept the country eastward, the columns effecting a junction at ■ Afweinah on 16th March.

Nothing, however, came of the movement, nor of a subsequent one towards the Gebi district, owing to the failure of the Warsangli and Mijjarten to co-operate actively as had been arranged.

The Mullah, skirting the Mijjarten country, escaped south across the Sorl, suffering great hardships, and losing numbers of his following and stock from thirst.

Simultaneously with this final movement a descent had been made upon Illig, a village on the east coast, of which the Mullah had possessed himself. Illig was captured on 21st April with a loss of 3 seamen killed and 11 wounded, the enemy losing 58 killed and 14 wounded.

Thus ended the last expedition against the Mullah, who on the withdrawal of our troops re-entered the Nogal Valley and established himself near Gerrowei on the Anglo-Italian boundary.

## CHAPTER VII

### REVISED ADMINISTRATION.

SUCH is the story of British Expeditions in Somaliland, none of which can be said to have attained its object. They may perhaps best be summarised by the battles which brought all but the last of them to a conclusion.

*First British Expedition, 1901.*—Lieut.-Colonel E. J. E. SWAYNE.

Samala, 2nd June 1901.—Mullah defeated.

Ferdiddin, 17th July 1901.—Mullah defeated, but British force obliged to retire.

*Second British Expedition, 1902.*—Lieut.-Colonel E. J. E. SWAYNE.

Erigo, 8th October 1902.—Mullah driven off, but British force obliged to retire.

*Third British Expedition, 1902-1903.*—Brig.-General W. H. MANNING.

Galadi, 17th April 1903.—British force cut to pieces.

Daratoleh, 22nd April 1903.—British force driven back.

*Fourth British Expedition, 1903-1904.*—Major-General Sir C. EGERTON.

Jidbali, 10th January 1904.—British victory, but no decisive consequences.

Illig, 21st April 1904.—Town captured, but British force withdrawn.

It is impossible to read such a summary and retain the belief that our four years of operations in Somaliland did much to assist our ascendancy in the country. We had worried the Mullah, but had not seriously impaired his influence.

The forces sent against him had been steadily increased in numbers and improved in material, native levies had been gradually displaced by British and Indian regiments, but the difficulties and the expenses were thus enormously increased, and there was no compensating improvement in the results; indeed, comparing the last two with the first two expeditions, the British losses were grievously enlarged without any corresponding infliction upon the enemy.

In point of fact the problem attempted was insoluble with the means at command. It was impossible with the troops which could defeat the Mullah to force a fight upon him, and equally impossible with the troops which could force a fight to be sure of victory. If a commander divided his forces to search the country he was defeated in detail, if he kept them together the enemy evaded him.

The Mullah was always too wary to accept a fight with the odds obviously against him, and only once did his main body meet with defeat. Once or twice he narrowly escaped capture, notably when, after Ferdiddin, with a single companion, he was pursued by a couple of Somali Scouts for several miles, who continued to empty their bandoliers, quite unaware of the value of the man jogging along in front of them on his jaded pony, disdaining to show the least consciousness of the bullets whistling about his head.

It may be urged, and perhaps with truth, that luck never came our way in all those years of exhausting effort. But we went the wrong way in our search of fortune, and more thinking and less fighting might have brought us to a secure conclusion.

With the money spent on expeditions which could only by a happy chance have been successful, a railway might have been built from Berbera to Burao, or even beyond it, and a real pacification of the country been attained, with the resultant improvement in revenue which was foreshadowed twenty years ago.

The impression left by the might of General Egerton's operations kept the country quiet for some time. The fire of the British square gave the Dervishes the worst jar in the quickest time they had ever experienced. They had come very near to snatching victory out of other defeats, this time they had never been within a long arm's length of it; and there was all the difference between dying with your spear-head in the square, and being mown off your legs five hundred yards from it. No talk of turning British

bullets to water counted for much after Jidbali. That kind of fire-water was altogether too hot for them, and the men who had tasted it and survived suffered a notable decrease in appetite.

Defections followed which left the Mullah in a more chastened mood, and there was but one small affair of looting in the year that followed, at the close of which, on 5th March 1905, an agreement was signed at Illig between ourselves, the Mullah, and the Italian Government, the Mullah accepting the Italian flag and protection, and being assigned a permanent location on the eastern Mijjarten coast, recognising the British boundary and pledging himself to refrain from raiding the tribes living under British and Abyssinian protection.

Meanwhile the 2000 Indian troops left in the country on the conclusion of Sir Charles Egerton's campaign had been replaced in November 1904 by a regiment of Indian infantry, 700 strong, the 33rd Punjab Infantry being lent for a year by the Indian Government, at the end of which, in September 1905, a new scheme was propounded for the administration of the country.

The variations which had taken place in the administrative material may be best set out in a table.

	1898.	1900.	1901.
Somalis, Camel Corps . .	25	53	49 —2 Native officers
„ Civil Police . .	95	110	168 —4 „
„ Levy . . . . .	—	470	720 —7 British and 6 Native officers
Somalis } Military Police	—	78	114 —3 Native officers
and } Permanent .	—	50	
Soudanese } Temporary .	—		
Indian Infantry . . . .	110-120	—	
Yearly totals . .	235	761	1051 —7 Brit. and 14 Native officers

In 1901 it was decided ■ combine the Camel Corps and Native Levy in a 6th Battalion King's African Rifles, 1087 strong, with 10 British and 8 Native officers, three Maxims and five 9-pr. R.M.L. guns; the Civil and Military Police being reorganised in one body called the Foot Police. The unsettled state of the country, however, prevented for some years the accomplishment of the first part of the scheme, till, in June 1904, five companies of Somalis 100 strong were raised, the establishment being reduced in September 1905 to 400 men, Indians being recruited in the place of Somalia.

At the same time it was determined to organise the military forces of the Protectorate in the following manner :—

- I. *The Tribal Militia*—1500 strong, in 60 sections of 25 each under Political Officers.
- II. (a) *Military Staff*—Commandant, Medical Officers, Staff Officer for Supply and Transport, and Paymaster.  
(b) *Standing Militia* of Four Mounted Companies and Half Company Depot under Five Company Commanders and Five Company Officers.  
(c) 6th (Indian) Battalion King's African Rifles ■ Four Companies (one mounted) under Seven Officers.
- III. *Armed Police*, consisting of—  
(a) Coast Camel Corps, 52 strong, of Somalia and Arabs, armed with carbines.  
(b) Civil Foot Police, 267 strong, chiefly Somalia, armed with M.H. rifles.

It was to take a hand in carrying out this scheme that Corfield came to Somaliland.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LAND OF SPICES.

CORFIELD had returned from South Africa on 17th August 1905 after nearly five years of continuous service, none of it easy, and most of it under rather rugged conditions; seldom with a superfluity of food, and not infrequently with an insufficiency of raiment; a good hard life in a fine climate from which he was seldom separated by much more than a sheet of canvas. It had done for him all that could be desired, filling out a frame which seemed built for adventure; so that at twenty-three he had the ideal figure of the pioneer, tall, broad, deep, with no weight that was not needed, and the unhardened make of muscle that does not know fatigue. He was "as strong as a bull," and had, what was of greater value, a magnificent constitution, so that despite years spent in malarial climates, and being constantly the victim of the mosquito, he was never once invalided.

It was therefore not surprising that when, in response to a notice from the Colonial Office, he applied for appointment as Political Officer to the new force being raised in Somaliland, he was at once accepted, though he had not held a commission, nor received, save from experience, any military training. There was, however, that about him which conveyed, in spite of a most tranquil and leisurely manner, an impression of character and capacity quite out of the common. It was an impression that men received from a first meeting and retained after years of exacting comradeship, and was felt just as much by the men he served

as by the men who served him. Nothing has been more remarkable in collecting material to tell his story than the ardour and unanimity with which men spoke to this compelling personal gift, which made him, by all who had to do with him, as much loved as he was trusted and admired. Soldiers who had served with him, though they had not seen or heard of him for years, were moved to an anger, very rare to our race, at the slight which had been put upon his memory, and a poor Somali clerk, when offering the entire week's income of himself and his family to the Corfield memorial, was almost too overcome by tears to explain his desire.

Corfield had been shooting in Scotland with his brother-in-law when the notice of vacancies in the new force reached him, and on the 26th received orders to proceed to Somaliland on 5th October, thus obtaining little more than a six weeks' holiday before taking up his new duties. But though he could cram as much as most men into his hours of play, and loved, as only the constant exile can, the luxuries and delights of home, he was always most alive when most at work and most in his element when in the wilderness, and the prospect of a future so experimental as that which awaited the new administrators of Somaliland appealed strongly to his adventurous spirit.

He appears to have taken Somaliland entirely on trust; the mere fact that there was a job there which was being offered to a white man was enough for him.

Beyond its reputation for sport and heat, he knew nothing about it, which is, perhaps, to say that he knew everything about it that is common knowledge.

The country seems generally imagined to be a sandy desert, something like the Sahara, on a level with the sea, inhabited for the most part by Mullahs, lions, and mosquitoes, and at the best a very small business, about the size of the Isle of Wight.

But Somaliland is really rather different. It is, to begin

with, as big as England and Wales and the Lowlands of Scotland; and it is rather important to remember its size, only to realise a certain inadequacy in trying to police it with 150 men, a force which would not go very far even in this order-loving country.

Then, far from being a low-lying plain, it is so elevated that all the mountains of Scotland and Wales could be put under it without the tops of any one of them appearing. True, it was, not so very long ago geologically, at the bottom of the sea, and the sea-salt still persists in its sands, and in much of its so-called drinking water; but what was once sea-bottom is now 4000 feet above sea-level, and to reach it the land rises by a series of gigantic steps in the space of a few miles, the first three of which are called the maritime ranges, and the last carries the crest to over 7000 feet. The maritime ranges, that run roughly parallel to the coast, pierce wedge-like through the gently rising surface of the sterile maritime plain, increasing in height from 1500 feet of limestone to 4500 feet of forbidding precipitous trap, after which the plain continues to rise for some 15 miles, till the escarpment of the great plateau is reached, some 85 miles from the sea, the extreme gable end of the Roof of Africa, which lifts the land southward for a thousand miles to the snows of Kilima Njaro. This rise of the land by a series of steps, and its slow fall away southward from the topmost of them, divides it into more or less parallel belts with similar conditions of soil, drainage, and climate, each bearing its peculiar flora, and offering a corresponding encouragement to flocks and herds.

One goes inland from Berbera, which stands on what was once a coral reef, first over blinding white shingle, then for some eight or nine miles across a sandy waste bearing a few stunted thorns and coarse grasses on which the lowland gazelle and little dikdik feed, and where a mean living may be found for a few goats and camels. It was on this arid plain that a writer of considerable eminence suggested

in the *Observer* that all the friendly tribes of the interior with their hundreds of thousands of cattle should be permanently accommodated. This being a fair sample of the "solutions" proposed even by responsible people for the Somali problem.

Once within the maritime range the country becomes more broken, watercourses which in the rains hold raging torrents, and even at other seasons have visible water for short distances, intersect it in all directions. A greater variety and greater quantity of deer are to be seen—kudu, wart-hogs, leopards, and baboons are common; pigeons, parrots, hornbills, starlings, and woodpeckers flit among the trees; there is a profusion of flowers, from the great gold and crimson aloes to the white and purple matthiolas, with their tender garden memories of scented English nights, and pools in the gorges lined with maidenhair.

Farther on, as the ground rises towards the red forbidding buttresses of the plateau, the acacias yield to gigantic cedars, there are groves of box trees and open stretches of greensward; the flowers have given place to flowering shrubs, and the birds sing no more; there is only the lowing of cattle to be heard by day and the hooting of the long-eared owl in the nights, which have now grown cold, and for half the year are cloaked in mists.

The last great step to the top of the Golis leads to one of the finest climates in the world—indeed, it might supply the ideal sanatorium for every ■ that can be cured by climate. The crest is covered by forests of cedar and box, which open out towards the south into an undulating park-like country; the glades are filled with strange and lovely flowers, pelargoniums, hibiscus, plumbago, and heliotrope among them.

The great plateau is composed of archæan rocks, and the Golis range is all that remains along its northernmost edge of the limestone and purple sandstone with which it was once covered. The limestone is but the topmost cap of all, and the

sandstone thins out gradually as the ground slopes to the south, the stain of its colour being spread over the country, known as Ogo, which drains towards the Indian Ocean, and furnishes one of its most fertile and hence debatable areas. Farther on, where the metamorphic rocks reappear on the surface, is the waterless waste of the Haud, which stretches on and down towards the Webi Shabeli and the Indian Ocean.

Thus the country divides itself into—

*Guban*, the land stretching from the sea to the plateau, intersected by the maritime ranges.

*Ogo Guban and Golis*, the terraces leading up to the crest of the plateau and the crest itself; including Mirsa, or the Haven, a broad ledge 1000 feet beneath it.

*Ogo*, the southern slope of Golis, the resort of several tribes in the dry season.

*The Nogal Valley*, a plain in a limestone formation formed by two affluents, one of which, the Tug Der, runs south-east past Burao.

*The Haud*, waterless plains, of grass, dense bush, and semi-desert country, perhaps the most valuable part of the country, supplying all the summer grazing. Water is plentiful all over it in the rains, but after a month of the dry season is only found at wells, three or four days' march apart.

Ogo and the Nogal Valley were the parts of the country with which Richard Corfield was to become best acquainted. In Ogo the coarse and giant euphorbia of Golis are mingled with the thorn jungles and grasses of the Haud. The acacia, known to the Somalis as the khansa, is the commonest of the bushes, growing from six to ten feet high, with tall, table-topped thorns, called lebbih, giving a curious and very marked character to the scene.

The soil is of reddish clay and bears the Haud's famous grasses, the daremo in chief, but in nothing like the same abundance. It is the continuous water in Ogo which makes

it such a necessity to the tribes which use it, it being their only refuge in the dry season, a fact which gives to Burao so great an importance as the centre of the district. The Nogal Valley differs little in appearance from Ogo, except that there is a much greater variety of stunted trees and shrubs, and the table-topped thorn disappears almost entirely. The Nogal is really a plain sunk in a limestone plateau, and access to the plateau, sometimes a thousand feet above it, is by rocky passes four to five miles apart, accessible to camels. The plateau north of the plain is called the Sorl, and seems, from what we know of it, which is very little, to resemble the Haud which bounds the plain on the south. The water from the valley forms a river which occasionally flows into the sea at Illig; but water in Somaliland is an uncertain thing.

Perhaps it would be wise to add that Somaliland itself is an irregular tract of country, shaped not unlike a ham that hangs by its longer side from the north coast of Africa, due south of Aden, Berbera being on the same meridian. The sea is its northern boundary, French Somaliland and Abyssinia are to the west, and Italian Somaliland enfolds all the rest of it.

One might add that in the interior there are no roads, and often the tracks are not discernible from one watering place to another.

When Corfield went to Nigeria, and had to devote himself to road-making, he lamented the desert which could be crossed in any direction, and the charm of its unbeaten way can only be known to those who have used it—at least for other purposes than military transport.

Perhaps anything more that need be said about the country will find its own way into the story.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PEOPLE WITHOUT A PILLOW.

CORFIELD arrived at Berbera on 19th October 1905, and if he did not find it depressing, that would be thanks to a temperament that did not concern itself very seriously with externals. Seeing that Berbera had a story in the earliest ages of Egypt, it is perhaps surprising that it still exists; it is significant that, living so long, it has never grown into anything better. The light upon its sandy spit may have been seen by the ships that brought gold from Zimbabwe for King Solomon's temple; buggalows laden with myrrh and frankincense for the gods of Greece hung, as they hang still, in that sheltered bay for the end of the kharif's blowing. Yet Berbera was even then an older town than London is to-day; Berbera that is still but a smear of mud and a scrabble of skins between the waste and the water, with a white streak of official dwellings at a respectful distance from the native town.

Places containing this curious preservative against increase and decay are perhaps best left alone by a commercial people, since the effort to make them profitable generally ends in disappointment.

Berbera was looking much more excited than its wont when Corfield first made its acquaintance, as the enrolling of the new Tribal Militia was in full swing, and there were more white faces about the Shaab than had been seen there before, when no expedition was preparing.

The Shaab, a word supposed to be derived from an Arabic root with a sense of separation, is the official quarter.

It was built during the Egyptian occupation on a ledge of coral about thirty feet above the sea. Of the Egyptian structures only the Mosque still remains, the other houses having been pulled down and rebuilt to European requirements. The old fort, and some other official buildings, lie outside it; its water supply comes by pipe from Dubar, nine miles away, and altogether it is very ill-conceived to meet that attack upon it which the Government has been asking for.

Seventy years ago Berbera was as temporary an affair as are now all the other so-called villages in Somaliland. From October to March, the period of *bat furan*—the "open sea," when the N.E. monsoon is blowing—some four or five thousand gurgis, the skin huts of the country, used to be pitched by nomad traders who came to exchange the products of the interior for rice, dates, and cloth.

Even now, so intolerable is the coast during the S.W. monsoon, that the population varies in the two seasons between five and fifty thousand, only those remaining who are too miserably poor to move.

In point of fact, from June to September, while the kharif continues, Berbera is utterly unfit for human habitation, and no white man should be compelled to remain there. There is absolutely nothing for a white man, or indeed for any other man, to do, during that period, and order could easily be maintained by a few Indian officials.

The ceaseless raging of the sand-laden wind, which sometimes persists for sixty hours without cessation, with a temperature that varies between 110° at midday and 100° at night, has such an exasperating effect on the nerves and works such ruin to the general health, that the man called upon to endure it during those four months is reduced for the rest of the year by at least half of his normal efficiency, and is never in the condition of well-balanced judgment which it is especially important he should be able to preserve.

A medical officer with long experience of the country



has expressed his conviction that no man exposed to the torment of the coast for an entire year can be described as entirely sane from a juristic standpoint; and, unquestionably, the seat of government should be transferred from Berbera to Sheikh for at least four months of the year, and a permanent sanatorium for coast officials established there. Ill-health in an official is never an economy, nor is his early transference to the list of pensioners.

Aden doubtless could also find a use for such a sanatorium, and it would be difficult to overstate the advantages of such a position for a wireless station, 4000 feet above the sea, and free from all the damage wrought by the heat and sand of Berbera.

Sheikh in 1905 was selected as the headquarters of the new Tribal Militia, and it was there that Corfield first made acquaintance with the country, and took that liking to it which never left him despite the strain to which it was often subjected.

He was one of the last of the political officers to arrive, and he found everything still very provisional, and no real order as yet resolved from the chaos.

"This is at present more of a military show than civil," he wrote to his sister from Sheikh in November. "They are raising Somali tribal levies in crowds of 225 and we are officering them. In addition we each have a tribe to look after—settle disputes, such as raiding, cattle-lifting between sub-tribes, etc. The people here have no settled homes, but are nomadic like the Arabs, and wander about after the best pasture. You were wondering if I should have a house. No! there is not a house in the interior. I live in tents like Balaam's ass or somebody in the Old Testament! The Government allows me two ponies, two mules, and two camels, and five servants from the levies—so one's household does not cost you much. There are only six political officers, and we are the only white men in the interior."





Corfield's appreciation of the Somali seems to have dated from these early days of acquaintanceship. They had in common a keen sense of humour, and a cheerful acceptance of destiny: in almost every other point of character they were as the poles apart; and it was doubtless his possession of qualities which were for them a subject of increasing wonder, which largely contributed to the reverence in which they came to hold him.

But the Somali is by no means the cowardly rascal which some from imperfect acquaintance have made him out. Burton was perhaps more responsible than anyone else for depriving the Somali of his character, but Burton's knowledge, in this one particular at least, was limited, and limited to tribes that are by no means representative. He resented their inconstancy, he resented their cowardice; and cowardly and inconstant they unquestionably may be. Yet where could greater valour or more devotion be found than was shown by Corfield's servants, fighting till they fell dead, one after another, upon their master's body.

And further, to know the Somali as he really is he must be seen up country. Apart from the outcast tribes and the agriculturists of the Webi Shabeli, the inhabitants may roughly be divided into:

1. The Coast Somalis, fishers, sailors and brokers principally, few in numbers, and unattractive.

2. The Traders, who travel with caravans from the interior to the coast, and who, though in a less degree than the Coast people, have suffered from contact with Europeans.

■ The Nomads, Bedouin, or Barkle—"the people without a pillow"—who live on milk, meat and ghi, and follow, with their flocks and herds, the track of the rains about the country. These last alone may fairly be considered as representatives of the race, and no man is entitled to speak of the Somali who has not lived for at least some months among them.

Sir Eric Swayne, who probably knows more of the Somali than does anyone, writes of him :

"The Somali has a many-sided character. He is generally a good camel-man, a cheerful camp follower, a trustworthy, loyal and attentive soldier, proud of the confidence reposed in him, quick to learn new things, and wonderfully bright and intelligent. He is untiring on the march, often a reckless hunter, and will stand by his master splendidly. . . . Occasionally, however, he relapses into a state of original sin, he becomes criminally careless with the camels, breaking everything in the process of loading, from leather to cast steel ; and he can be disrespectful, mutinous and sulky.

"He is inordinately vain, and will walk off into the jungle and make his way home to the coast, leaving two months' back pay and rations behind him, if he considers his lordly dignity insulted. If he sees a chance of gain, he is a toady and a flatterer. His worst fault is avarice."

There is no disputing that last sentence, but it requires mitigation, since the Somalis possess a virtue which the avaricious seldom share, generosity ; for when they revisit their relations after some favourable enterprise, they will scatter their hard-earned money in the most prodigal fashion, not unfrequently impoverishing themselves in the process. Their love of adventure also proves often stronger than their desire for wealth, for they will throw up a profitable service for some chance of wandering which appeals to them.

"The Somali's chief faults," writes Captain McNeill, who had much opportunity for forming an opinion, "are his inordinate vanity, his grasping greed, and his terrible excitability." But he adds elsewhere : "As a soldier he is a splendid marcher, requiring but little transport and capable of enduring great fatigue. He is plucky, cheerful, and easily led by any sahib to whom he takes a liking. He is respectful also, and obedient to the white man. He is good-tempered, easily amused and kept in a good humour. He has sometimes been accused of sulkiness. I have certainly seen occasional

displays of this failing by individuals, but it is decidedly rare, in my opinion, and, even then, it is not fair to accuse the Somalis of being a sulky race. He is honest too, as far as his conception of the meaning of the word goes."

Dr. Drake-Brockman, who has studied the Somalis, sick and well, for over ten years, agrees in the main with these opinions. He regards their excitability as beyond dispute, and considers their avarice as amounting almost to a disease, but a disease by no means common to the entire race. Their vanity he has always found quite harmless, a fault that may be turned to useful purposes, as an appeal to it is almost always capable of working miracles. In honesty he thinks them superior to most natives, so long as they are trusted; and their sulkiness as generally due to unskilful handling, and by no means a common failing.

"One admirable trait in a Somali's character," he continues, "is his complete lack of vindictiveness; you may severely punish him one day and he will come up smiling to you the next as if nothing had ever taken place between you and him; and as long as the punishment is deserved he will take it like a man and forget all about it. He is not only quick but keen to learn new things, but is very often quite content to get a smattering, and considers himself proficient; it is no uncommon thing when engaging a servant, and on asking him if he can wait at table or cook, to hear him say that he can do everything!

"He has got an excellent opinion of himself and his abilities, and nothing on earth will convince him to the contrary; if, however, you prove him to be in the wrong, he will show no sign of discomfiture, but merely give expression to his surprise by the utterance of the one word 'Wallah!' (By God!) If other Somalis are standing near he will enter into a debate with them, pointing out how strange it is that he should be wrong. If you happen to show him anything that he cannot understand, he sums it up in the two words 'Wa shaitan!' (It is the devil!) . . . It is never advisable to raise

your hand to a Somali; there is nothing he takes to heart so much as being struck by his master: he will submit to a thrashing if you order one, but once you strike him yourself, away goes his respect for you for ever."

Perhaps some part of his excitability may be referred to the country and climate in which he lives. It breaks the nerves of most Englishmen, and must conceivably have some effect on his. The excessive dryness of the air at a high altitude, the intense heat of the sun, the extreme variation in temperature between day and night, often amounting to over fifty degrees, and the life of unrest and continual movement and anxiety may well make temperamental their effect upon the nerves.

The Somali has extraordinary powers of endurance, and, though an enormous eater when he gets the chance, leaving little but the bone out of a leg of mutton, is able to march for months on a milk diet with an occasional meal of meat, and will cover immense distances without a drop of water.

Of his extraordinary vitality and the healing virtues of his climate, Captain Hudson, I.M.S., gives a striking example in the *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*.

"A Somali was shot by the enemy, and the bullet penetrated just below his stomach, and came out to the right of his vertebral column behind. He was then speared in five places. One spear wound ripped up his abdomen and let out twelve feet of gut, another wound cut into his right thigh, and a third almost into his left shoulder joint, and there were many other smaller wounds. The big wounds were six or seven inches long and two inches deep. This man crawled from twelve noon under a blazing sun, stark naked, and trailing his gut behind him, until 5 p.m., when he was picked up and attended to. He recovered."

Some instances cited by Dr. Drake-Brockman are scarcely less remarkable; notably of a youngster who crawled for six days across 120 miles of the waterless Haud, with a spear

wound in his abdomen, and of a child who walked for 30 miles through the jungle for a day and a night with a bullet lodged at the side of her spine which had shattered the shoulder-blade and broken two ribs, driving the broken piece of one of them into her right lung.

In spite of this vitality the Somali succumbs rapidly to such diseases as phthisis and pneumonia. He wears the same cotton "tobe" whether he be sleeping out on the scorching Cuban, or through the bitter nights of the plateau, and he is often weakened by want of food and long marches, when the greatest demand is made on his powers of resistance.

In speaking of his engaging qualities one must not forget the poetic strain which runs through the entire people. The Somal language is perfect in almost every form, and the Somalis have a fine ear, a delicate sense of tone and rhythm, and a quite remarkable gift for poetical impromptu. Performances which would excite amazed admiration in a London salon, are the merest commonplace of the Somali's day.

You may hear him almost any evening, as the brand of the hot twilight dies out upon the desert, crooning under a guda thorn a melancholy and melodious improvisation on his dusky mistress, the perfections of his sorry nag, or his own immortal prowess as a warrior.

That ■ one of his Keltic gifts, and the others, the gifts of ornamental and agreeable lying, of flavouring his information to gratify the inquirer, and of extracting humour from the most unpromising materials, must not be overlooked. If he is also somewhat like a spoilt child, a trifle too excitable, of a proud and easily wounded spirit, of capricious moods and capacities, and surprising alternations in his apparent character, a lover of change, wandering, and adventure, and always an unwilling vassal to authority—are not these also qualities of the Kelt?

Contrary to what would be one's expectations, the Somali



appears to make a good workman. The manager of the Fibre Company, which was pitched by the policy of scuttle so unceremoniously out of the country, spoke in the highest terms after two years' experience of his diligence and capacity, asserting that he "did a good day's work and in many cases became highly efficient" . . . adding: "With a little encouragement and personal interest taken in him, almost any Somali will work at high pressure for hours and do work of which one would think him physically incapable."

His adaptability is perhaps his most surprising quality. A child of the desert, born to its aristocratic conception of a man's career, as bedouin and warrior, he will, outside his own country, turn his hand to employment, however menial, as stoker, sweeper, anything you please.

He takes that outer world very much as a royal personage takes a democratic continent. Its ways are so extraordinary that they hardly can be said to count, and one may relax to their absurd demand without derogation to one's elsewhere dignity.

One primal characteristic he has which should appeal to British pretensions: he is a born lover of freedom. No sycophant of civilisation like the Japanese, he flings aside the utilitarian ugliness of western apparel at the earliest opportunity, and, wrapped once more in his spotless tobe, is his own man again.

A sturdy Baganda policeman once neatly summed up his weakness when meeting a Somali caravan in East Africa.

"Somalis! they no good. Each man his own Sultan!"

His weakness truly, but his attractiveness as well. "Each man his own Sultan." An English politician boasted, as he replaced his "topper," that all his constituents were under one hat. The Somali might declare, as he rewound his tobe, that all his masters were in one suit of clothes.

In judging him one must remember how ill the motives of his wild unresting life can be measured by the conventional appraisement of our civic trivialities. What can we,

fitted tight, like well-oiled cog-wheels into the machine of civilisation, know of a life blown loose and light as thistle-down over the abyssmic realities? What can we know of a being that has never sensed security long enough to know it; born on a camel's back, bred with an unrelaxing grip upon the spear, and tasting not even an instant's respite even in its last hour? With an eye ever upon the horizon for the rare lure of the rain, or the frequent threat of an enemy, the sands of the desert his only road, his home a bundle of mats upon a camel, with starvation never so far away that he ceases for long to feel the pinch of it, and the wild beasts of the wilderness always so near that any night he may be awakened with their fangs in his throat. Is it not rather wonderful that our subject souls can find so much in common with this unbridled mortal that we can even measure his deficiencies in terms of our own virtues?

## CHAPTER X.

### "HANDING OFF" A LION.

SUCH was the people whose destinies Corfield had been called to shape, a people light and long of limb, a pleasant brown in colour, with keen clean-cut features, that express a ready and generally smiling intelligence.

He was kept hard at work on them until the close of the year, drilling some sort of soldierly shape into them, by just the same means as we use to give a soldier's carriage to our own much less promising recruit; for the Somali stands six foot, holds himself straight as a spear, and steps out like an antelope.

In January 1906, just back from a shooting trip in which he had obtained some good heads, Corfield wrote to his sister:

"We are wondering out here, now that a Radical Government are in power, whether they will abandon the interior and retire to the coast; if so, you may see your worthy brother home sooner than you expected."

Shortly after the New Year, as the force under Sir Eric (then Colonel) Swayne took shape, and began to respond to discipline, the area of its influence was extended, and Corfield was sent to Suksodi, some ■ miles from Sheikh, where he made his first acquaintance with the rains of the Golia, and suffered the discomfort of having his camp flooded out. Thence he was moved on in May to Ber, which lies some ■ miles south-east of Burao in the valley of the Tug Der, and is very liable to sudden and prolonged flooding when the rains in the hills have been exceptionally heavy. The

Tug Der is one of the two watercourses which carries abundance to the Nogal Valley, that fertile plain which now, thanks to our vacillations, might be rechristened "The valley of dry bones."

"The rains have been very heavy," Corfield wrote on 22nd, "and the big grass plain I am on is all a swamp, and I have had to move my camp and take refuge on the top of a hill. Things are rather unsettled at present out here. Swayne has gone to British Honduras, and the new Commissioner"—Captain H. E. S. Cordeaux,—“has been very bad with fever and has not been able to do anything—besides, the fact that a Radical Government are in power, and friction with the Mullah or Abyssinians must be avoided at all costs, makes settling tribal disputes and raids on the frontier somewhat ticklish work.”

In August he was back again in Sheikh, very pleased to be able, thanks to the presence of the 6th King's African Rifles, to get a game of polo three times a week; and the Somali pony, though it would not be admired at Hurlingham, makes a quite intelligent and much enduring player.

After a short visit to Hargeisa, he was drafted there as assistant political officer at the end of 1906. Hargeisa, which formed the centre of administration of the western district, is one of the few places in the interior of British Somaliland which has about it any air of permanence.

It is a village of one stone building and a few hundred mat huts, but the sense of permanence comes from that rarest thing in Somaliland, cultivation, about half a square mile being usually under jowari, the result of its constant and plentiful supply of water and of its having been for the past forty years a "tariga," or priestly settlement, of which there were some half-dozen in British Somaliland, forming centres of more or less lasting occupation and diffusing an influence from their educated and travelled inhabitants.

Hargeisa is also of importance from its position on the

caravan routes to Milmil, Harrar, Gildessa, Zeila, Bulhar, and Berbera, and from its nearness to the Abyssinian frontier. It has lain outside the more troubled area of the past ten years, and wears, owing to the greater fertility of the country about it, a distinctive appearance. The river at Hargeisa that drains towards the Gulf of Aden from the north slope of the plateau, is a very considerable affair in the rainy season, and runs picturesquely through a deep gorge of the hills, with heights close on 5000 feet on either side of it.

The months he spent beside it brought Corfield probably his only experience of comparative comfort in Somaliland, and though sport was the sole excitement, he appears to have thoroughly enjoyed the time he lived there.

It was sport, indeed, which nearly ended his career; his hand being so badly mauled by a lion, that his life was endangered.

Dr. Drake-Brockman, to whose skill and attention Corfield certainly owed his arm, and probably his recovery, has been good enough to write the following account of the incident, as he had it from Corfield on hurrying up country to his assistance.

It is probably the only instance on record of a football player using the "hand off" to prevent his being collared by a lion, and the fact that the lion missed his first grip and got a poor hold with his second may have been due to the surprise he experienced at receiving a slap in the face from the man he was chasing, owing to which Corfield, getting hold of a tree trunk in lieu of a goal-post, was able literally to wrench himself out of the lion's jaws.

"In Swayne's militia one of the companies was commanded by Lieutenant F. W. Bell, V.C., and he had with him as his assistant or subaltern, R. C. Corfield. While Bell's company was stationed at Hargeisa, looking after the Western District, the following encounter with a lion occurred.

"News of a pony having been killed by a lion ■ miles from Hargeisa was brought in one day by the Somalis, with the result that both Bell and Corfield, neither of whom had shot a lion, without delay proceeded to the spot and built a small thorn zareba close to the carcass. While partaking of their evening meal, so as to be within their zareba before sundown, a Somali rushed up and reported that he had just seen the lion. The meal was abandoned and both Bell and Corfield soon took up their positions within the zareba to await the lion's return. The 'kill' lay in somewhat dense bush country, and when the sun had set it was by no means easy to see either the 'kill' or the lion when he appeared. Beyond some rustling among the bushes nothing was heard or seen for about four hours, when the half-moon was close on setting, and in the dim light Bell saw the huge form of the lion standing over the carcass of the pony looking straight at him. Corfield having won the toss, the first shot was his, so Bell whispered to him that the lion was standing over the 'kill.' Corfield, however, from his position could see nothing, and while trying to get a view of the lion moved sufficiently to scare the beast away. There was another long wait of three hours before the lion returned, but this time he appeared immediately opposite Corfield's position, and, crouching behind the carcass, seized it and attempted to drag it away, exposing his entire head and the upper part of his body. Corfield brought his paradox to bear on the lion, when the latter gave him a better shot by releasing his hold on the carcass and standing upright immediately opposite him. Corfield pulled the right trigger but a misfire resulted, so he quickly pressed the left, aiming at the lion's head. The shot striking the lion between the eyes, the huge beast reared up on to his hind-legs, came suddenly down and slunk off into the bushes behind, as Corfield thought, to die.

"At the first streak of dawn, Bell and Corfield emerged from their zareba and held a consultation as to how the

spoor should be followed up. Corfield, on examining his paradox to ascertain the reason for the misfire, found that the striker had in some way or other dropped out during the previous evening, thus rendering the right barrel useless.

"The spoor led them into a dense patch of 'irgin,' a species of cactus-like bush which grows in dense clumps. The whole party now consisted of Bell, Corfield, two gunbearers, and two Midgan hunters,—another Midgan joined the party later. Together they advanced, taking every precaution, for about two miles, until the lion's tracks led into a considerable patch of tall grass and low bushes. The spoor led through this across a more or less open country to a dense patch of 'irgin' bush about ten feet in height, covering an area one hundred yards long by seventy broad. Into this patch the lion had gone, and, before entering it, the precaution of examining the surrounding red earth was not omitted, with the result that the fact of the lion being in it was placed beyond a doubt. The party now broke up. Bell and Corfield, together with their gunbearers, began slowly to examine the bushes at the edge of the clump, and they had not proceeded more than four or five yards when Corfield's gunbearer saw the lion crouching behind a bush not more than fifteen feet in front of him. Corfield, who was next to him, hadn't time to bring his rifle to his shoulder before the lion with an angry roar dashed away through the bushes towards the opposite side of the clump. In the meantime one of the Midgan hunters had climbed up a tree near by in order to see if he could see anything of the lion, while the two remaining Midgans had gone to the opposite side of the clump to track the lion in the event of his breaking away in that direction. As soon as the lion made off, the Midgan up the tree called out to his friends, pointing out the direction in which the lion was travelling, which happened to be towards them. They at once bolted as hard as their legs could carry them away from the clump of 'irgin,' while both Bell and Corfield ran round in the hope

of getting a snap shot at him as he broke cover on the opposite side. When, however, the lion emerged from the clump the first thing he saw was one of the Midgans in full flight, whereupon he at once directed his attention to this man, whom he reached in a few bounds, leapt on to his back, bringing him to the ground, and almost simultaneously, bounding off his body, made a half turn and came straight for Bell and Corfield. At this stage Bell's gunbearer ran away, but Corfield's remained. Corfield fired at the lion at about twenty yards as he was bounding towards him, but missed his shot and, as the gunbearer did likewise, the next thing Corfield knew was that he was dodging round a small tree with the lion grabbing at him while he was trying to hand him off. The lion missed him first, only succeeding in tearing his coat, but soon caught Corfield's right hand in his mouth, biting it badly through the palm, while pursuing him round the tree. Having done this, the lion faced Bell, who had been running up, and stood for a second staring at him not more than five feet away. In his hands at this critical moment Bell only had an old Martini-Henry service rifle, and with a well-directed shot he planted a bullet through the lion's brain, whereat he rolled over dead.

"After Bell had examined Corfield's hand they both went up to the body of the wounded Midgan, and found that the lion had given him but one bite—in his powerful jaws he had grabbed the unfortunate man by his right side, and his huge canines had pierced the chest wall and penetrated the lung. With such a severe wound little hope of his recovery was entertained, and he passed away the following morning.

"The most remarkable fact in connection with the shooting of this lion lay in the first shot. This, as above mentioned, was fired out of Corfield's paradox, and struck the lion between the eyes. On examining the skull later it was found that the bullet entered the skull on the right of the middle line, on a level with the lower margin of the right orbit, and, passing backwards and slightly to the right,



lodged in the posterior part of the orbit without apparently in any way affecting the vision of the right eye.

"The second, a soft-nosed Martini bullet, passed over the zygomatic arch, entering the brain at its base.

"Owing to the distance of the nearest medical assistance, about eighty miles, Corfield's bitten hand rapidly became inflamed, the inflammation spreading as far as the elbow and causing intense pain. Two operations had to be performed as soon as possible, and the arm and damaged hand were saved. These days of suffering and high fever were borne by Corfield with his characteristic pluck and cheerfulness, although, owing to the offensiveness of the discharge from his wound and his weakness, he frequently vomited, especially when the dressings were being removed.

"He was for some weeks living with me under my care, and it was during this time that I formed a friendship so intimate that it could only have, as it has, been severed by death. His nature could never have been capable of a mean act, and, whatever his faults, his greatest enemy could never say that he was not as fine a specimen of British manhood as it was possible to meet. Since 1905 we corresponded fairly regularly, so I knew him very well. He did his duty nobly, and I am convinced that the action of Magalayer will be handed on for generations as one of the finest fights ever fought in Africa, as it has been the greatest check the Mullah Mahomed Hassan has had since his rise.

"R. E. DRAKE-BROCKMAN."

Mr. C. H. M'Diarmid is able to add some interesting details of what happened while medical assistance was being summoned.

"I am, I fear, somewhat hazy in my recollection of the concluding stage in this story," he writes; "whether Dick had an Englishman with him or not I cannot be sure, and ■ may be that if he had a companion that it was he who went for the doctor, but I remember that while still shaken by

his experience and suffering great pain, Dick endured a night of anxiety which would have tired the strongest nerves.

"The neighbourhood was infested with lions, and Dick found himself temporarily deserted by his frightened men and left alone to guard his transport animals—ponies, I think he mentioned, and I suppose camels. Crippled by his injured arm and unable to use his gun he set himself to keep the fires blazing round his zareba all night long.

"He could plainly see lions prowling round outside the ring of flames, and it did not seem improbable that one beast more courageous than its fellows might at any moment leap the fires and attack the terrified animals in his charge, perhaps even himself."

Close as the shave was, and curious as is sometimes the effect of the fang poison of the great cats, Corfield's nerves were quite unshaken by the adventure, and he took the earliest opportunity to test them by going out single-handed in search of the next lion whose appearance was reported after he had recovered from his wound.

Dr. Drake-Brockman had taken him to Sheikh, where the magnificent climate gave him the best chances of recovery. He spent Christmas at Berbera, and wrote to his mother from Bulhar on 3rd January.

"I am now back in Bulhar, the next little harbour along the coast. We started from the Commissioner's at 1 a.m. and got here at 7 a.m., 50 miles on riding camels. Both of us have camel companies, so we have the pick of some pretty fast camels. It is awfully hot down here compared with the interior, but the change of diet is nice, getting fish, fresh eggs, etc. . . . My hand is practically all right again, though, of course, you must expect to see its beauty spoilt a bit, the big canine tooth going right through the palm of the hand, breaking the bone and tendon—my second finger is useless, I am afraid. As regards how it happened it is hard to tell on paper; but I wounded the lion through the head first,

which made him furious. He was in dense jungle when we got him again; he killed our native tracker before we could get near, taking him in his mouth as he galloped, gave him one bite right through the lungs, and dropped him. I had fired then as he galloped with my paradox and missed, he then turned and charged at me, my second barrel missed fire, my native orderly was 20 yards away with my second gun, so I dodged for a small dead tree trunk near on my right, and overshot it as did the lion on the other side, and we stood facing each other. He then came for me although nearly dying, and I tried to ward him off with my hand which he took in his jaws. I wrenched it out and got to the tree again, and he lay down, when Mr. Bell came up and shot him through the head, which finally finished him."

He mentioned a hope that something could be done to his injured hand when he returned home in the way of straightening the fingers, but though some improvement was effected in their movement, their lost powers could not be restored to them, and his hand remained slightly crippled.

He returned to Hargeisa in February, and wrote from it in the following month.

"I am back here, you see, and shall stop here now, making this my headquarters till I come home on leave. . . . I have a very pretty camp about two miles up the river from Hargeisa, and am building a small bungalow."

Left by himself, he made a month's tour of the District in April and May, and was away again in June for a fortnight, making acquaintance with all the local rivalries and feuds, a knowledge which he was to turn to such wonderful account, when revisiting Hargeisa in 1913, as the sole arbiter in Somaliland of tribal quarrels.

This year, 1907, was a fateful one in the affairs of Somaliland, for Mr. Winston Churchill paid it one of those butterfly visits which stir to such a grim irrision the working insects on the spot, in which he apparently made up

his nimble mind by a distant view of the Golia that the country must be abandoned.

Captain C. E. Dansey, who had the misfortune to be serving in the country at the time, thus gives an account ■ the occurrence in the *Morning Post* :

"I left Somaliland when the evacuation began, and, owing to the part I had been compelled to play then, nothing will ever take me back to face the natives (despicable as many of them are), who believed the word of the British Government as passed to them by me. . . . To go back to the beginning of the Somaliland scuttle, in 1907 Mr. Winston Churchill started on his well-known, well-advertised tour in East Africa. Captain Cordeaux, then Commissioner in Somaliland, was away on leave when Mr. Churchill (then Under Secretary of State for the Colonies), travelling in one of his Majesty's ships, appeared at Berbera. He remained there, I think, some twenty-four hours, rode nine miles away from the coast, interviewed a few coast officials and one military officer, and retired knowing all about Somaliland.

"I was at the time in Burao. Within a few days of Mr. Churchill's departure the news reached me that he had announced as his opinion to all and sundry that the evacuation of Somaliland was his policy. News travels apace in Somaliland; within a few weeks every native knew of this, and then our troubles began, culminating in 1908 by the Mullah writing an offensive letter to His Majesty's Government ordering them to leave 'his country.' Mr. Churchill had thus found an able and powerful colleague."

Thus do politicians complicate the problem of government for the unfortunate officials on whom its administration devolves.

But Mr. Churchill's inability to keep his opinions to himself did much more harm than that; it upset a country that was inclining to settlement, bred renewed hope in a rascally marauder, and thereby cost the British people many thousands of pounds, a number of needless lives, poor

Corfield's among them, and a loss of prestige for which it is at present impossible to estimate what may be the ultimate exactment.

And all the while the man who six years later was to pay for the consequences of this visit with his life sat at Hargeisa teaching, in so different a way to a people that was to learn to love him, faith in the old type of English honour, in defence of which he was to die, while he scratched boy-like the weeks from a calendar that still separated him from his long-expected holiday.

It was but a brief one after all, for he did not leave Somaliland till November, and was back again in January, having delighted in the interim in his first experience of hunting, enjoyed while staying with his brother-in-law at Barton Court.

## CHAPTER XL

### THE TROUBLING OF THE WATERS.

DURING the first three years of Richard Corfield's residence in Somaliland the shadow of the Mullah that had lain so black upon the country had only fallen faintly across its south-eastern boundaries.

The might of General Egerton's movements had made a sufficiently deep impression on the native mind to loosen the bands of the Mullah's influence, and that astute gentleman had been occupied in manœuvring for a fresh hold upon the doubtful tribes before once more venturing to assert himself.

Located at Gerrowei by the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1905, he was in direct touch with the eastern portion of our Protectorate, as yet unadministered, containing tribes so doubtfully inclined as the Warsangli and the Dolbahanta.

It was considered neither possible nor advisable to extend our influence over the Dolbahanta, our policy being to preserve them as a buffer between the Ishak tribes and the Dervishes.

The Mullah for some time devoted all his energies to defeating this policy. For four years he tried moral suasion, or what passes for it in such places, pointing out that as he, the Mullah, was certain sooner or later to overrun the country and drive the British into the sea—a prophecy which even at that time received ready credence—the tribe had better make terms with him while they could do so favourably. Where these overtures proved abortive, thanks largely to the tact and vigilance of our political

officers, he instigated the Warrangli and Burnad to raid the Dolbahanta.

If the raids were unsuccessful, he could give them the cold shoulder, but as soon as they had succeeded in terrorising the Dolbahanta, he could use his position behind them as a lever for extorting compliance with his demands.

These machinations were in progress during the whole of 1907, and in the spring of 1908 they were beginning to disturb the comparative quiet which had prevailed in the country for nearly two years, and the sense of apprehension along our eastern borders was making itself felt as far off as the coast. Somaliland somewhat resembled that pool of Siloam which was surrounded by people eagerly waiting to reap an advantage from each descent of an angel to trouble its waters. Every tribe in Somaliland became alert and uneasy wherever rumour credited its dark genius with the intention of once more troubling the political waters, uncertain what horror of ill-fortune this new move might mean for them, but anxious, if it were someone else who suffered, to have a share in the cleaning up.

The position of these unfortunate people for the next four years, threatened on one side by the Mullah's fury, warned from the other by British might, and never knowing on which side their salvation lay, was pitiful in the extreme. Nothing more callous can be imagined than the manner in which for five years by false promises we fostered their hopes of protection, and forced them into opposition to their merciless enemy, only to hand them over in the end, helpless, to his vengeance.

We have now, in the two years immediately preceding that abandonment, to trace the administrative methods employed so far as they concerned Richard Corfield.

It happened that in the beginning of 1908 he was transferred from Hargeisa, which has always lain outside the troubled area, and may be regarded as on the western boundary of unrest, to the point from which the Mullah

was shortly to demand our retirement, which controlled the district threatened by his embroilment of the Dolbahanta. It was in consequence by far the most interesting place because the one of greatest importance in Somaliland at the moment, and Corfield doubtless had been selected to fill the post in consequence of the very marked aptitude he had already shown in handling natives.

He writes from Ber, on 24th February: "I arrived here last Monday, after first going up to Hargeisa. I then came on here via Odeweina and Burao, a longish trek. This is the headquarters of the Eastern District, which I am taking over from a man called O'Neill who is going on leave.

"It is a dreary sort of place, nothing like so nice as Hargeisa, and it will take me a long time to get as comfortable as I was at Hargeisa. One advantage about this place is that there is a company of King's African Rifles here with two British officers, so I am not alone like I was at Hargeisa.

"This is the worst time of year now in this country before the rains, everything parched and dead, and everybody digging night and day at the wells to get a little water."

Ber, which means in the Somali tongue, "bad gypsum water," and must not be confused with *bur*, which means "a hill," lies about fifteen miles south-east of Burao, where the watercourse of the Tug Der widens out over a considerable valley. It is not easy to explain its selection for the headquarters of the Eastern District, as it is a very depressing spot, and its water supply, which is drawn from wells in the river bed, is neither good nor abundant, or at least it was not in 1905. Then it was aperiens and liable to exhaustion, being apparently held up in pockets which had no discoverable relation to one another. During the dry season these pockets had a way of giving out altogether. Pits or shallow wells were used for tapping the water, these



pits being dug in the pockets, which fill after freshets and require to be dug out again. In drought this digging out, to which the letter refers, is very hard work when it has to be carried into the stiff subsoil, which must never be pierced, and the resultant supply is generally of a somewhat objectionable character, and declines to be pumped through a filter.

Water is, of course, the conditioning factor of life in Somaliland. The nomadic character of the people is caused by the rains, the stock being forced to follow the growth that springs up in their track.

On the map of Somaliland may be found an abundance of names, but these are not the names of towns and villages.

The Somali village is carried on a camel's back, and it is the lack of water which denies to it a greater permanency. The names are the names not of villages but of wells, and even where these are permanent, and the supply good, they provide drink but not pasturage, and could not afford permanent settlements for a pastoral people in a wilderness, which never shows more than a blush of green on the aridity of its withered face.

In the whole of British Somaliland there are only a few small streams, in the Maritime Hills and Golia Range, which flow above ground for short distances all through the year.

All the rest of the water comes from brief-lived torrents, wells, and pools, and almost all of it is of an unpleasant character. The wells lie from 10 to 130 miles apart, and the water is from 50 to 80 feet below the surface, and is generally passed up in skin buckets from hand to hand, what arrives at the surface being turned into hide or wooden troughs from which the animals drink. These wells give a permanent supply, whereas the pools or pans in water-courses generally run dry about two months after the rains. In the Nogal Valley this water is strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen; it suits the stock better than untainted water; but is unfriendly to man. On the interior

plateau it contains the sulphates of magnesium, sodium, and calcium in sufficient quantities to act as a violent purgative, and the enforced use of it rapidly exhausts troops new to the country. Where the water does not contain injurious chemicals, it is often brackish or contains enough soil to make filtration difficult.

In addition to the mud there is frequently a good deal of animal life, but of its operations little seems to be known. The waters of Berbera, admirable by comparison with that of the plateau, causes dysentery, attributed to the fine flakes of mica which it contains.

Ber, as a station, though dismal enough, has not the monotony of Burao, which lies in a flat sandy waste of river bed surrounded by dense bush, as the Yerrowa Hills rise to the north-west of it, and the Gondaweina Hills to the south-east, over 3000 feet high, outline the edge of the Nogal Plain, and the dim crests stretch away into the heat haze to the south eastward to join the Bur Dab Range beyond Dul Madoba.

But it was not from monotony at the moment that Richard Corfield was suffering. On the 4th March he was writing: "Everyone out here is discussing what the Mullah is going to do. . . . The Mullah is restless, and the Dervishes are looking up to within 90 miles of this place (Ber), and I don't think we can go on for much longer without seeing some fun, unless the Government take it all lying down and repudiate their obligations to our protected tribes . . ."

And again a week later: "Very full of work, and expect to leave here shortly for 15 or 16 days. I expect to have to go down to Garrero and Bohotle. Some of our tribes have been very troublesome of late and will have to be punished—by name the Aligheri."

These Ali Gheri are a clan of the Dolbahanta, and had their location near Bohotleh; they were in consequence directly affected by the pressure which was being put by

the Mullah upon their tribe; the Dervish headquarters being moreover nearer to them, and doubtless considerably more active than the British headquarters at Ber; any activity there which might precipitate a conflict having been sternly discountenanced by the authorities at home.

"I am still at Ber," writes Corfield on 17th March, "and in constant communication with the Commissioner. We haven't yet apparently made up our minds what to do, and in the meantime the Dervishes are getting bolder every day. I have a fairly decent camp here as headquarters, but not so jolly as Hargeisa. Everybody is praying for rain, and all the prisoners are kept well-digging night and day, but even as it is I have had to send eighteen of my trotting camels and some ponies to stay at Burao till the rain comes."

The supply of water at Burao is always superior to that at Ber, and has never been known to fail completely; the wells being equal to a much more prolonged drain, are easier of access, and can be cleared out by Somalis without difficulty, though in very dry seasons the operation has constantly to be repeated. The water itself is better, and slightly less aperient. Meanwhile the Commissioner had decided that, even at the risk of complications, British authority must be asserted, and Corfield's next letter commences with an apology for having missed two mails owing to the very strenuous time they had been having.

"On the 21st March," he writes on 5th April, "O'Neill and I left here with 50 men to loot the Dolbahanta Aligheri tribe . . . they live over 100 miles south-east of here, between Lassader and Bohotle. We left here secretly at 8 o'clock one evening and arrived at Ainabo, near Eildab, 5 p.m. next afternoon. Here we stayed till 8 p.m. the next evening, when we started on a long night march to surprise the Aligheri. We trekked solidly till 5 a.m. next morning, when our guides told us there were four villages ('karias') Aligheri on our right. Here we sent off 15 of our men, and with the remainder went on till 7.30, when we struck nine

villages. Down we went on them and surprised them completely, collaring 550 odd camels; we heard they had more villages with camels and cows twelve miles farther on. So leaving 20 men with this loot, we started off and arrived at Hoftirro only to find they had moved to God Anod, another eight miles; on we went, and getting to God Anod about 11 a.m., we collared over 200 cattle with horses, donkeys, etc. Here we halted for the day and collected the stock. The next day, sending it all back with most of our men to Ainabo, we went on to Lassader and Shiloleh, and rounded up everything we could, getting back to Ainabo ourselves the day after. Our total bag was 53 rifles with ammunition, over 800 camels, 240 cattle, 10 horses, besides a lot of sheep, donkeys, etc., and prisoners.

"We arrived back here, 3rd April, day before yesterday, safe and sound, after a very successful little raid."

So big a haul of stock without bloodshed was indeed something to be proud of, especially since the enemy possessed arms and ammunition, and might easily have been induced to use them.

Somali feeling, at least before the advent of the Mullah, was all against the taking of human life. There was, it is true, a practical reason, for the fines were heavy; 100 camels for a man's life, and 50 for a woman's—the masculine unit having still in these parts an inflated value—but the capture of stock as a punishment for offences is one the justice of which they acknowledge and contemplate without resentment, though taking the earliest opportunity to get their own back at some one else's expense.

Cattle, except in the Nogal Valley, seldom form part of a capture; indeed, save there and in the Golis Range near Hargeisa, a herd is very seldom to be seen.

In the Golis valleys are to be found fine herds of the common shorthorn humped species, which Dr. Drake-Brockman regards as of comparatively recent introduction, but there is rarely sufficient grass for them elsewhere, and

even in the highlands grass has to be gathered by hand and brought down to them in the dry season from heights they cannot scale. In the Nogal Valley their milk yield is always small, and vanishes altogether when green food disappears, their condition becoming deplorable. Sheep and goats, which can go for weeks without water, when green food is to be had, and are only watered every seven or eight days in the dry season, stand a much better chance of picking up a living; but even they are often a piteous spectacle when long marches have to be made in search of water; leopard and hyena living on the bones that mark the desperate way.

Corfield makes light of this march for rounding up the Ali Gheri, as he makes light of everything in which he took a share, but it was for all that a very creditable exertion. But the Somalis are great marchers, and it was Colonel Swayne's consciousness of their powers in this direction which induced him, for the sake of mobility, to dispense with desirable military qualities, in order to obtain the swiftness of thrust which he could be sure of only with local levies.

With his pony, which he only rides when going at a trot or faster, the Somali can cover 70 to 100 miles in the twenty-four hours, and even with 14 stone up a Somali pony, seldom more than 13½ hands, will do 42 miles in ten hours. In the 1901 operations against the Mullah our mounted troops once marched 100 miles in thirty-six hours, and a company of mounted infantry marched 50 miles during the night, carried out a successful raid, and returned during the next night to its starting-point. On another occasion a Somali mounted infantry company marched for three days through a district with not a drop of water and only very poor grazing, with the loss of but one pony.

Foot-marching, the levies covered during the operations of 1901, 1170 miles, and detached companies 1700 miles in three months; an average for the whole period of 13 and

■ miles a day. Marches of 30 miles a day were frequent, and on several occasions 40 miles were traversed in the twenty-four hours. In the pursuit, after Samala, 34 miles were covered by the infantry in twenty-one hours, and 120 miles in forty-eight hours by the mounted troops; while 40 miles was marched by the infantry on the days that Odargoey, Kurmis, and Firdiddin were fought.

Seeing how parched was the season, it is not surprising to find Corfield writing of a "tremendous amount of work to get through . . . in the handling and distribution of all the looted stock," and taking over the headquarters from its late commander, who returned to Barbera after the successful raid.

"Water is most frightfully scarce, as hardly any rain has fallen up to date. The 6th K.A.R. Company have left here and gone to Burao, as they are unable to water their ponies here. The district is in a very unsettled state with one thing and another."

So he remained alone, a solitary outpost of Empire in the desert; no men of his own speech near him, no force behind him but the good name of his country. Small wonder that men so placed are obliged to be jealous of that name, since it is all that is granted them to do their work with, to protect the poor and keep the turbulent in order. Small wonder, too, ■ they lose their temper with politicians at home who indulge in that sort of democratic fustian which means treason and death when translated into the desert's tongues.

Surely the exercise of even a little imagination would enable these idle talkers to appreciate what it signifies to be surrounded by a savage and uncertain people; for months, perhaps, without sight of a white man's face, and within no more hearing of his speech than a worn gramophone, treasured mimicry of the divine, can contribute; enduring the ceaseless exasperations of an unfriendly climate, and privation of everything that pertains to comfort; with no

relaxations, no mental intercourse even with books, with health always uncertain and no assistance if it fail, and death a matter any day may bring out of the unrelenting and illimitable wilderness about him—surely, the prompting of common humanity should prevent the least considerate from making this lonely man's job any harder for him?

Before parting with the K.A.R., Corfield went with one of their officers in chase of a couple of rhinoceroses. The two-horned African rhino, though common enough in the southern parts of the Haud, down to the Webi Shabali, seldom comes within 100 miles of the coast, and is usually seen alone, in broken country, feeding on the young shoots of the dwarf acacia.

"Starting at 4 a.m.," Corfield reports, "we got on their tracks about 8 a.m., and an hour afterwards sighted them trotting off. They are such gigantic beasts, they look quite incongruous in the bush. We went after them mounted, and sighted them again in the next valley, we dismounted . . . and with our gunbearers went on on foot. After trotting round a little they made towards us, then sheered off again; finally, we got to about 100 yards off them. As they stood under a tree facing us, we thought they were going to charge, but it is useless firing at them head on as their horns protect them.

"I was on my knee ready for a shot, when suddenly they whisked round, and before either of us could fire had half a dozen bushes between them and us. It was an exciting moment, wondering what they were going to do, you've no idea how huge they are. We went after them, and although we followed their tracks, mostly at a canter till 1.30 p.m., they never stopped, and finally completely out-distanced us."

Clumsy as the rhino looks, and giving as he moves little impression of speed, he gets over the ground at an almost incredible pace, and a pony has to be an extraordinarily good goer to live with him in broken country.

## CHAPTER XII.

### AN ADVANCE TO THE AIN.

ON 10th May, Corfield was still at Ber, but speaks of changes probable in the near future. He had been sent for by the Commissioner, and Captain Cordeaux was evidently intending a counter move to the Mullah's intrigues in the Nogal Valley.

"He is advancing the headquarters of this district," writes Corfield, "and I shall soon be going down to Kirrit and Wadamago, but not for a couple of months, I expect, as I am pretty busy. . . . Next Tuesday I am going off to Burao, and the end of the week am off to raid a tribe called the Habr Toljaala Musa Abokr, who have been giving trouble, and when I return from there I am off south to arrange for the position of the new headquarters of the district, and visit the tribes down there. Then, in the middle of June, the Commissioner comes round on his inspection tour. So I am in for a busy month or so."

"The little expedition," Corfield reports towards the end of May, "panned out very well. I managed to get hold of over 300 head of camels, besides prisoners and rifles. Now these tribes have been sat upon it will be easier to run the district, and I don't expect to have to do any more 'looting' for some time.

"In a few days I am off for a short tour round the district, probably going from here to Garrero, thence to Eildab and so back home. . . . I have to report to the Commissioner on a suitable well for headquarters, and I shall advise Wadamago. . . . On this last little trip of mine I had a



terrible time with the rain. Of course, having to travel fast and surprise the tribesmen, I had no transport, and consequently no tent or anything, and two nights following it rained and pelted all night, and the country I was operating in became an absolute morass (between Waridad and Eildab) in the rain. There was as much as ten inches of rain under foot both nights. I was very glad indeed to get back."

Waridad lies on the Tug Der, the watercourse which carries the southern drainage of the Golis Range into the Nogal Valley, at a point, some 35 miles east of Ber, where the channel, after being widened out by flood water to a delta nearly nine miles across, contracts to something less than two on its way eastward. It is consequently rather liable to flood during the spring freshets, but the rainfall Corfield had the ill-luck to encounter sounds exceptionally heavy for the season of Gn, in that part of the plateau, the storms which sometimes occur there in Kalil, the month of April, having probably been delayed.

On 18th June, Corfield, having auctioned the remainder of the Ali Gheri stock, left Ber and marched to Garrero, proceeding on the 15th to Eil Dab and Badwein. He found the country much refreshed by the rains and full of rumours of fresh Dervish raiding, the Mullah being reported as having entered British territory at Halin.

At Badwein, in the Ain Valley, Corfield was at the core of the most debatable territory in the country. At Samala, 18 miles to the south-east of him, Captain McNeill with 400 men had in two days' desperate fighting beaten off 5000 of the Mullah's men, and at Jidbali, 35 miles to the east, General Egerton had dealt the Dervishes the most crushing blow they had received. Halin, which the Mullah was reported to have reached, was a favourite spot for his headquarters, and he was probably in actual occupation of it when his advanced troops were beaten at Jidbali. It ■ served by a permanent stream of water, very easy of access,

which joins the Dun river, and flows more or less into the sea at Illig.

By 28th June Corfield was back at Ber, lame from the hard camel-riding during his three weeks' trip, and probably somewhat knocked up from overwork and the change of weather.

Overwork is the one cause to which such men always decline to refer their sufferings, the condition being either so normal that it escapes their notice, or so congenial that they can think no ill of it.

For a week he had only been able to hobble about on one leg, and was unable even to ride over to Burao to see the Commissioner. It was, no doubt, thanks to the latter's arrival that a doctor had appeared in Ber to prescribe for the injured leg, and Captain Dansey is also mentioned as having accompanied the trip to the Ain Valley.

"We are in for a fiendish kharif this year, I'm afraid," Corfield concludes; "it's blowing frightfully hard; last year was fairly mild."

The kharif which blows on the Haud and higher plateau during the first three months of Haga, July to September, is perhaps the most exasperating climatic peculiarity in the whole country. During those three months of the south-west monsoon, the kharif commences at midnight and rages—no other word expresses its fury—for fourteen hours. While it is blowing nothing can be done; it is almost impossible to march, impossible to pitch a camp, impossible, when trekking, with any satisfaction to prepare or to eat food.

The whirling air is thick with sand, which clogs the nostrils, grits the teeth, and penetrates, whatever the protection, to one's very skin. One can but sit to leeward of a pile of stores and wait, as patiently as one may, till the torment of it sinks into a stifling heat.

There is in it probably more nerve-wrecking energy than the climate can cram into the remainder of the year,

and it is a climate that very few men can endure for a year, for the most part in solitude, and remain normal.

Corfield had the temperament which endures such trials with least disturbance.

In such climates a high mental engine rate, if one may so phrase it, soon wears out the constitution. Corfield's mind "turned over slowly," and had the pulling power which so often goes with low rates of revolution. And he had, to continue the simile, in his humour, his quiet acceptance of things, his unfailing geniality, a lubricating efficiency which secured him from the "heated bearings," or the still more dangerous "seizing up," which in the wilderness is so often responsible for disastrous consequences between white men and natives. No one who knew him can imagine Corfield losing his temper contemptibly, even in the kharif, and no man who has not endured it can conceive the tribute that is thus paid him.

Captain Cordeaux reached Ber on his tour of inspection on 11th July in the worst of the kharif, despite which he expressed his complete satisfaction with what he found there, and he had certainly cause to be grateful for the fashion in which his instructions had been carried out. He approved the removal of the district headquarters to Wadamago, to Corfield's relief; Wadamago in the Ain Valley, with an abundant supply of good water, probably from an underground river, and surrounded by picturesque vegetation, offering a delightful prospect after his dreary sojourn at Ber.

After a second trip of a fortnight to the Nugal Valley Corfield returned to Ber, from which he writes on 25th August:—

"The Mullah is becoming very truculent and aggressive, and there is every probability of fighting. Two companies of the 6th King's African Rifles are being moved to Wadamago. Of course this Government won't fight unless driven to it, but I fancy the Mullah will either force them to

do that or we shall have to scuttle, and that would be a most disgraceful thing, meaning, as it would, abandoning our protected tribes. The situation is very interesting, and as I am in political charge of the Eastern District, adjoining the Mullah, I am well in the middle of it. I go into Burao this afternoon to confer with Dansey, the senior pol. man. . . . Don't say anything about this at present, as it is more or less confidential, but of course once things are mentioned in the papers it doesn't matter.

"Hostilities may be postponed for a month or two, but they are bound to come.

"During my last trip I have been negotiating with Nur Jama, the Mijertain headman, trying to use him as a kind of buffer between us and the Mullah. The whole of the Warsangli, one of our tribes, have gone over to the Mullah's cause. I chased a raiding party the other day, but they had too long a start of me."

Striking confirmation of the seriousness of the conditions described in this letter had been received by the Commissioner a few days earlier in the shape of a communication from the Mullah "demanding, under threat of a renewal of hostilities, withdrawal of our observation posts from Bohotleh and the Ain Valley, and intimating that the Warsangli are all his Dervishes, and that consequently any punitive action we may take against them on account of recent raids on our tribes will be an act of hostility to him."

Lord Crewe, then at the head of the Colonial Office, showed himself quite alive to the gravity of this dispatch from Captain Cordeaux, and was plainly in accord with the latter's conclusion that "we cannot acquiesce in the Mullah's demand," and with Corfield's assertion that "to leave our protected tribes at the mercy of the Mullah, sooner than fight, would be a gross breach of faith."

At the same time he could not be blamed for acting with what to the men at the front may have seemed an extreme of deliberation. He had the records of our previous expedi-

tions before him, and they afforded anything but encouraging reading, even to a man with a predilection for decisive action.

Experience had proved that it was almost as difficult to strike the Mullah as to brain a ghost, and our blows at his elusive head had proved increasingly expensive. Small wonder that a responsible Minister should hesitate before recommending to his Cabinet the renewal of a policy which could plead from the past no tangible achievements.

Quite the wisest course appears to have been adopted. Pressure from the East Coast littoral upon the Mullah was attempted through the Italian Government, the Warsangli as a coastal tribe being sensitive to any interference with their sea-borne traffic, and the Commissioner was instructed to inform the Mullah "that his demands are inconsistent with the maintenance of friendly relations . . . that they cannot be complied with and must not be repeated;" and the observation posts were to be warned "that if the Mullah advances and is too strong for them they must for the time retreat"; but a blockade of the Warsangli coast was deferred for fear of precipitating hostilities.

The Mullah's letter to which Captain Cordeaux refers is a characteristic example of Muhammad bin Abdullah's shrewdness and effrontery, and contains many delightful touches. He is inexpressibly hurt by British aggressiveness. "I have fixed peace between us," he pleads. . . . "for my part I like your peace. . . . I do not like disturbance and fighting, . . . further know that I am honest with all men, . . . also I inform you that the Dervishes are like sweet milk," concluding: "From one who may be poor and small and a coward and oppressed, but who relies on God for mercy and victory."

His "sweet-milk" Dervishes, who had just concluded a fifth successful raid on our Ishak tribes, looting thousands of stock and killing many men, he represents as the victims of treacherous aggression, and demands the removal of our

post from Bohotleh and our withdrawal from Badwein and the Ain Valley.

Fearing for its isolation, Captain Cordeaux, under pretext of scarcity of water, withdrew the police post from Bohotleh, but to negative the false impression that might thereby be created, and to check the isolated raids which might so easily develop into general hostilities, he directed Captain Dansey, with the Somali camel company of the King's African Rifles and fourteen days' rations, to make a tour of the Ain Valley and report on the situation there. Meanwhile he strongly urged the blockade of the Warsangli coast—the Mullah's letter having declared that tribe to be his "proper Dervishes"—not only as a punitive measure, but to prevent the further importation of arms and ammunition, which with the approaching close of the south-west monsoon would be sure to re-open briskly. At the same time he admitted that his proposals might precipitate hostilities, but believed that "firm and decided action at the present moment, even if it does not have the desired result, can at the worst only bring to a head questions which cannot in any case be for long postponed, and which delay is not likely to make easier of solution."

Corfield accompanied Captain Dansey to the Ain Valley, with Wadamago for their headquarters, where they had for some time merely to await events, very much cheered by the thought that the Government was maturing plans for energetic action, but fearing that, next moon being Ramadan, the Muhammadan month of fasting, the Mullah might postpone his operations until its conclusion.

They had not, however, very long to wait for an encounter.

On 4th September Captain Cordeaux reported two further raids in the Ain Valley, and the camel company were advised not to extend any pursuit of raiders 30 miles from Wadamago.

The Warsangli attempted another raid on the 10th, but

this time retribution followed them. Captain Dansey reached Wadamago on 6th September and found all quiet, but Dervish movements had been reported by Corfield's secret agents, so that, taking Lieutenant Rose and a section of the K.A.R., Captain Dansey and Corfield moved on the 8th to Eil Dab, which was found crowded with stock and karias, and a mass of Dolbahanta karias in the Kalindera Valley eight miles north of it. Lieutenant Rose and the section were left at Eil Dab, Captain Dansey and Corfield returning on the 9th to Wadamago, about 16 miles west of it. On the morning of the 10th news was brought to Lieutenant Rose of a raid upon the Dolbahanta karias in the Kalindera Valley. Dispatching a runner with the news to Wadamago, he at once started off in pursuit, and, after an hour's hard riding, came up with about 150 of the Warsangli driving off the loot, and after an hour's fighting succeeded in forcing them to abandon their booty. In the pursuit he outdistanced his men, and coming suddenly upon a group of the enemy, his camel was shot and he severely wounded in the left arm. This ended the pursuit, the enemy losing from 50 to 60 men and 17 rifles, an excellent piece of work for which Lieutenant Rose received, as he deserved, the greatest credit.

Corfield, who had started with Captain Dansey to Rose's assistance, was back in Wadamago on 11th, and receiving news late on 14th of another raid, moved out at once, and overtaking a party of Buraad, or Dervish robbers, with looted camels, put them to flight and recovered all the stock.

Corfield was now left in charge at Wadamago, with one company of the 6th K.A.R., nothing but a few faint-hearted friendlies between him and the Mullah, and no reinforcement near enough to matter.

Such isolation exactly suited him. No one to consult and the chance of an instant and vital decision required at any moment.

RICHARD COLEFIELD AND HIS POLITICAL ESCORT AT L'ETRE SURMONT.

*Photo. by Geo. R. F. Parker-Hessington*







"I do like the responsibility," he ends his letter.

A week later, Captain Dansey—"of whose tact and judgment in dealing with a difficult situation," the Commissioner reported, it was impossible to speak too highly—in concluding a most discerning summary of the serious condition of the country for the Commissioner's enlightenment, adds: "I should like to point out the excellent work done by Mr. Corfield. His work is invariably good, but all through the last six weeks he has shown that he has good judgment and initiative. He has given the greatest assistance on all occasions and never spares himself."

Before his views had thus been confirmed by Captain Dansey's conclusions, Captain Cordeaux had urged on the Government the necessity for being prepared for every possible contingency.

The Mullah had been reported as intending to kill and eat all his remaining stock before the Ramadan fast at the end of September, after which he would be compelled by sheer desperation to assume the aggressive. In that event, the Commissioner pointed out two possible courses: "(1) Hold on to Burao and Sheikh forts and endeavour to keep open Berbera-Sheikh-Burao line of communications until the arrival of reinforcements; or (2) withdraw to the coast. Of these two courses I am of opinion that the first is the only possible one."

At the same time the Commissioner proposed to remove any cause of provocation by withdrawing the British force from the Ain Valley, leaving only 40 tribal militia at Eil Dab as an observation post.

To this scheme, which erred, if at all, on the side of surrender, Lord Crewe gave his consent, and at once took steps to render it effective.

It was arranged that 1500 men should be requisitioned for service in the country, 400 from Aden, 300 from Uganda, 400 from the East Africa Protectorate, and 400 from Nyasaland; and the India Office, as well as the Governors of

Uganda and the Protectorate, were at once warned to that effect; permission being accorded the Commissioner to put the forts at Sheikh and Burao in a state of defence, and hold on to them if necessary till the arrival of reinforcements.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MANŒUVRING FOR POSITION.

It is of importance that this crisis in the history of the country should be understood, since it was faced by all concerned with sagacity and determination with most encouraging results.

Lord Crewe trusted the opinion of the man on the spot, and backed it ungrudgingly with the means demanded. He showed likewise a consideration for the honour of his country which was treated later on with such deplorable indifference, in agreeing to the continuance of a protection on which we had made many helpless thousands dependent. At the same time he betrayed an incomprehensible ignorance of the mental processes of the East by urging the Commissioner, "if a means could be found," to assure the Mullah, "that we do not intend to attack him so long as he abstains from interference with our tribes."

The inability to appreciate the mischievousness of such an attitude when dealing with a savage to whom might is right and all clemency weakness, lies at the root of many an administrative blunder engineered from home, and gives point to a scheme which Corfield was fond of propounding for the reconstruction of the Colonial Office. He was always, as are most men of action, a sworn foe of Bureaucracy, and "Bureaucrat" was with him a word of extreme contempt. To lessen the numbing influence of the bureau on the ultimate ends of Empire, he would have decreed that all Colonial Office clerks should serve at least two years in the countries they assisted to administer, and that all

officers from the Colonies, after reaching a certain grade, should serve a term in the Colonial Office, so that an informed and uniform line of thought should eventually be created.

Captain Cordeaux pointed out to the Secretary of State how "inexpedient" would be any reiteration of our peaceful intentions, and gave in a memorandum a masterly review of the position as it doubtless defined itself to the Mullah, who, trading on the common conviction that he was finally destined to overrun the country, had determined to employ a tribe, like the Warsangli, less susceptible to our influence, to raid into a condition of helpless exasperation a tribe like the Dolbahanta which looked to us for support; avowing himself as behind the raids if they were successful and disowning them if they were not. His success in undermining the latter's centre of gravity had made it necessary to send Captain Dansey to the Ain Valley to restore the balance, and maintain that factor so essential to the well-being of all our Ishak tribes, the neutrality of the Dolbahanta.

There was, however, one further factor in the problem on which the range of the Mullah's mischievousness depended. For five years he had been in conflict with the great tribe of the Mijjarten lying between him and the Indian Ocean, and only rumour dealt with his shifts of fortune. If he had still cause to fear them, he would not, whatever his success with the Dolbahanta, venture any serious operations against ourselves. Also he had been forced to keep on good terms with the Warsangli, since he had used their port of Las Khorai through which to obtain his arms and ammunition.

To blockade their coast might thus either convince them of the disadvantage of alliance with the Mullah, or might be used by him as an argument for aggression; but as any symptom of weakness might equally furnish such an argument, an energetic policy involved no greater risk, and

placed us, if the danger materialised, in the more commanding position.

Such were the considerations by which the Commissioner's policy was dictated, and the alternative he selected seemed the one open to the least objection.

On its approval by the Colonial Office, the blockade of the Warsangli coast was made effective, and all vessels entering Las Khorai were subjected to a rigorous search. While, on the other hand, 40 tribal militia at Eil Dab replaced the force in the Ain Valley and the headquarters of the Eastern District was withdrawn to Ber.

It is thus from Ber that one finds Corfield writing on 22nd September, a good deal concerned and not at all sympathetic to the idea of retirement or to the policy of waiting on events. He relates a brush he had before leaving Wadamago with some 80 spearmen who came raiding up to Garrero, chasing them with half a company of the African Rifles, but with no greater success than the capture of a few prisoners.

His letter of a week later contains a sentence of much significance, when considered in relation to the action in which he lost his life. "Apparently the Home Government have been intensely indignant about our fight the other day"—the one no doubt in which Lieutenant Rose was wounded and which the Commissioner reported as reflecting the greatest credit on all concerned,—“and have wondered how we dared fight to protect our tribes, the proper procedure being, according to them, *to keep the peace* even if you have to run away to do it.”

The fight and the blockade of the Warsangli coast had had, indeed, a momentary effect on the Mullah, for he turned a deaf ear to the Warsangli's claims for assistance, and contented himself with talking big and lending them rifles.

Meanwhile Corfield's work had been lightened by the arrival of Captain O'Neill to take over the Habr Toljaala

tribes, leaving him with the Dolbahanta and the two police posts at Eil Dab and Bohotleh.

The Mullah, however, was by no means at the end of his diplomacy or of his resources. He has been always quick to appreciate evidence of weakness in his foe. Our retirement from the Ain Valley was soon reported to him; his spies—and his spies were everywhere—had little progress of military operations to report from Berbera, and after waiting a while to ascertain the significance of the tribal militia in Eil Dab, he sent 100 Dervishes with the Warsangli to wipe out the police post which had been left there.

Corfield forwarded the news to the Commissioner, who happened to be in Sheikh, and expected to be sent at once to the assistance of his isolated men.

"They'll either have to choose now to pluck up a little spirit or leave the unfortunate post to itself," he wrote, "which, mind you, they are quite capable of doing. . . . Their great idea seems to be to hide their head in the sand like the ostrich, and try and keep quiet the fact that anything is wrong out here. . . . Instead of showing a firm front, or, at least, putting up a good bluff, we are simply waiting for the Mullah to attack."

To his spirit there was nothing more intolerable than to leave his men exposed to a danger he was not sharing himself, and the thought of his helpless Somalis at Eil Dab, an advanced pawn in the political game, liable at any moment to be swept off the board, fretted him to exasperation. Had he been but with them, the exposure which he hated on their account would have been sheer joy to him.

But pawns have sometimes to be risked, and when, a few days later, he went to Eil Dab for a week, he found Captain Cordeaux' policy justified by a relaxation of the previous tension, and only a few small robber bands wandering about the country.

He returned to Burao, where, owing doubtless to the importance ■ had acquired as the southernmost position to

■ held in the event of hostilities, the Government was building a house for himself and another political officer. Their house-warming was somewhat postponed by the advent of the November rains, which at Burao are occasionally heavy. His house-mate had been sent to Aden to buy Arab riding camels for their police, and was to bring back some furniture for the new establishment; but Corfield's hopes and fears were centred on the camels, since if sufficient were not obtained he would have himself to go over to Aden, a place which he detested.

He also mentions the extravagance of a Goanese cook, in place of a Somali, whose culinary range is generally extremely limited, and not much either within its own borders.

He was not, however, to be left long to a contemplation of permanency. At 2 a.m. on the 8th November he was roused to hear the news that a party of Dervish illaloes had fired upon the police post at Eil Dab. Always ready to start anywhere at a moment's notice, he turned out two companies of the K.A.R. and moved off in the darkness, reaching Eil Dab, 80 miles away, before dawn next morning; not bad going for a surprise march!

The Illaloes, after testing the alertness of the post by an exchange of shots, had galloped away, and Corfield, after spending two days in Eil Dab, returned with his riflemen to Burao, more concerned than ever for the safety of the post, which he describes as "terribly exposed." The tribes in front were moving back hastily in fear of the Dervish advance, and refugees from the Mullah's camp stated that he had determined to fight.

Corfield considered the situation as critical, and that was evidently the Commissioner's opinion, since he advised the Home Government that the dispatch of troops from Aden, Uganda, and the East Africa Protectorate should be proceeded with, the failure of the Italian Mission to the Mullah being, in his view, likely to precipitate a crisis.



The Secretary for the Colonies lost no time in giving effect to this recommendation, but his dispatch detailing the means taken for its consummation contains a suggestion that is strangely undiscerning.

One can sympathise with the disinclination of His Majesty's Government "to entertain the question of sending an expedition against the Mullah," and their anxiety "that no action should be taken which might entail the dispatch of an expedition to extricate any of our troops from Burao, or from any other post in the interior." One is glad to note that they fully realised "that to withdraw from Burao would be to make a great demand on the discipline and loyalty of the Somali soldiers . . . who would be leaving their tribes unprotected from the Mullah's raids."

But what can one say of the proposal to treat the Mullah as an Indian frontier tribe "and to come to some arrangement with him by which he would undertake to refrain from raids on British territory in return for the payment of an annual subsidy"!

The ignorance which could constitute any comparison between the two situations is almost incredible.

"It is always a temptation to a rich and lazy nation,

To puff and look important and to say:

'Though we know we should defeat you, we have not the time to meet you,

We will therefore pay you cash to go away.'

And that ■ called paying the Dane-geld;

But we've proved it again and again,

That if once you have paid him the Dane-geld

You never get rid of the Dane."

The Commissioner's reply to the suggestion of this new Danegeld was what might have been expected. He pointed out that an agreement which you have no power to enforce is not the best subject for a subsidy.

Also that no agreement, however liberal, would "induce the Mullah to renounce the very mainstay of his existence.

Rather it would serve, as the Illig agreement had done, to increase his prestige and give him a new lease of life. . . . It would provide him with the means of purchasing more arms and ammunition, and encourage him to make further demands which would become more extravagant as his strength increased. . . . As I have said before," Captain Cordeaux continued, "the Mullah's organisation depends for its very existence on movement and activity. It cannot stand still; it must either go forward or go back. The view which I have held all along, and which I still hold, is that, if met by a bold and unswerving front, it will go back. If, on the other hand, it should go forward, it can be held in check by the additional reinforcements available."

Meanwhile, up-country, December was passing with conditions by no means improved. "Awfully unsettled, and most unsatisfactory at present," Corfield writes on the 2nd, and on the 8th was off again to Eil Dab for a fortnight, but still hopeful of being able to make a Christmas camp on Wagga Mountain, near Sheikh; half a dozen white faces come together for the festival which has so pathetic a flavour under the Equator.

These hopes faded, however, when he was back in Burao with the news of a big raid of Dervishes on the 18th near Kurmis, to the south of Bohotleh, and a couple of days at Sheikh was now the utmost he dared expect.

He was able, however, in the end to get away on Christmas Eve for a week, spending five days with the Commissioner at Annaleh, where he all but bagged a Greater Kudu, the biggest antelope in the world.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### VACILLATION.

WITH the new year the reinforcements for Somaliland began to arrive, the Government showing great promptness in arranging for their dispatch. Meanwhile the Commissioner had to report two successful raids of the Mullah, one on the northern Mijjarten, and another on the Ogaden, in which some of our tribes suffered heavily from having declined to profit from the warnings given them. The Mullah was reported as about to advance into the Ain Valley, and Captain Cordeaux proposed, as soon as the Nyasaland contingent arrived, to place them and four mounted companies of the local battalion in the Valley, to reassure the tribes with which it was then full, believing that such a move, in combination with the blockade, would induce the Mullah either to reopen communications or retire into the Bagheri country.

Colonel J. E. Gough, the Inspector-General of the King's African Rifles, was put in command of the force which was dispatched to the Ain, but he expressed himself, in a survey of the situation, as regarding the move as a palliative only, and one which he viewed with very little satisfaction. His letter contained many cogent arguments in support of his opinion that the only practical alternative for the treatment of the country lay between a military expedition and complete evacuation.

Eight hundred men in the Ain would, he urged, be no match for more than 1200 of the Mullah's men, and would, if so confronted, either have to retire, or require an expedi-

tion to help them out; whereas if the proposed full number of 1500 was brought into the country, the Mullah would be too wary to run his head against a force able to defeat him, but not strong enough to pursue him, and would continue to undermine our influence by raiding just out of its reach. The Protectorate might for the time being be preserved from outrage, but sooner or later the imported troops would have to be withdrawn, and a disimproved situation would then have to be faced.

The soundness of this contention was to appear later; but Colonel Gough had no more attractive alternatives to offer than another military expedition or the evacuation of the country, and after the failure of our mistaken attempts at coercion, it was evident that some quality of compromise must cling to our subsequent efforts. Between the blockade maintained along the Warsangli coast, and the pressure exerted by our troops in the Ain Valley, Captain Cordeaux hoped to squeeze the Mullah southwards towards the Bagheri country before the break of the rains in April. If he could be thus forced to cross the waterless Haud, exposed to attacks from the Mijjarten and Ogaden, unsupported by the Warsangli, he would be sure to suffer heavily, and his prestige be even more seriously impaired.

The Commissioner was quite aware that a final settlement could not be expected even from the success of the measures he proposed. So long as the Mullah remained a power, settlement for Somaliland was out of the question.

But he believed that "if met by a bold and unswerving front," that power would steadily diminish, and British supremacy be reasserted.

The blockade of the Warsangli coast, which was being most admirably conducted by H.M.S. *Fox* and H.M.S. *Proserpine*, was beginning to tell not only on the importation of contraband goods, which had brought the Jibuti arms traffic to a standstill, but on the temper of the people, as two amusing epistles addressed by lieutenants

of the Mullah to the commander of the *Proserpine* attested.

"I have seen the ship which is searching after me," wrote Ahmed, a noted gun-runner, ". . . and now it is certain you have broken the peace which was between us. . . . I want from you reply, and also wish to see what you will do with the Warsangli. . . . And if there will be 'fitna' between us, it will be better for me, and I will get good. And you will get hell, if God please."

Sayed Al Hashami was somewhat milder:

"The world is finished and ruined, and after that all was calm," he asserted. "And now you begin to do contrary and break the peace. . . . if you will give our rights back, and leave our village, it is better, otherwise be ready for war and expenditure, and don't repent afterwards, and now the expenditure will probably be on you."

The letters were backed up some six weeks later by a hostile demonstration of 200 riflemen against Las Khorai, no doubt to intimidate the Coast tribes which had made their submission to the Government. They were dispersed with shell-fire, and two companies of Indian Infantry with two months' rations were ordered from Aden to protect the inhabitants and increase the pressure on the inland Warsangli.

A few days previously the Mullah had proposed by open letter to return a few camels on condition of our evacuating the country, probably to impress all who might read it with the basis of negotiation at his command. Meanwhile, from Burao, Corfield wrote of the Dervish raid on the Habr Yunis, in which 5000 camels were captured and many of the pursuers killed; and of a report among the tribes that the Mullah had threatened to "make great trouble and wipe out the infidel European" unless the blockade of the coast was raised in twenty days.

"Yesterday," he continues on 3rd January, "we got the news that two stray Dervish forces had left the Haroun at

Illig, one for Bohotle side, and one for the Ain (Eil Dab) to fight the Government.

"Dansey and I have strongly recommended the advance of all available troops to the Ain, or else the immediate withdrawal of the Eil Dab garrison. It remains to be seen what the Commissioner will do, but half measures are no good any longer. The Government have got to go or fight. The Yao (Central African) Battalion arrive on Tuesday."

A week later, the suspense which they had been so long enduring, seemed likely to be ended.

"I hope by the time this reaches you that we shall have started a movement against the Mullah. A column of 700 men start from here next Sunday, the 17th. Sanction has been asked from home for Gough to remain out here and take command, and in that case Dansey and I are probably going to do the Intelligence and Political work. . . . Our post at Eil Dab has been withdrawn to Olesan pending the arrival of the column. All day I have been busy arranging about transport, 750 camels are required to start with."

The very presence of Colonel Gough, to those who knew him, was a heartening influence, and it was with real delight that Corfield reports on 20th the start of the 6th Battalion K.A. Rifles, which he was accompanying, on its way to Wadamago, from which place, a week later, he announces his departure for Eil Dab with one company of the K.A.R., leaving Colonel Gough and the column, which he describes as consisting of "1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th K.A. Rifles, composed of Soudanese, Swahilis, Baganda, Yaos, Amatonga, Angoni, Somalis, and every African native under the sun."

"Dansey and I," he writes from Eil Dab, "are intelligence officers to the show. We have some 100 illaloes—that is, scouts and spies—under us, besides other scallywag irregular Somalis. Altogether the work is very interesting, but there's plenty of it, and there'll be more when our reinforcements come, and, if we advance, such as finding guides, locating the enemy, etc. . . . It is just like active service at present,

no tents, no anything, and all shut up in one huge thorn zariba."

Sitting still under such conditions naturally proved somewhat irksome. Kil Dab is not a particularly cheerful spot at which to be marooned inside a zariba, and it becomes monotonous to drink water which is a powerful combination of Carlabad and Harrogate.

Corfield had the highest appreciation of Colonel Gough, and a great liking for Captain Hugh Dawnay, his staff officer; he had likewise complete confidence in Captain Cordeaux's grasp of the situation: but news which reached him from home made dismal reading for men whose energies were becoming sapped by inaction under such trying conditions.

"It does indeed look from the papers," he writes on 6th February, after a fortnight of it, "as if we were going to sit still after all and do nothing. But the papers don't get everything right always. For instance they say, 'Beyond a point about 80 miles inland it is not proposed to advance.' Well, where I am writing this letter . . . is 170 miles inland, and both Cordeaux and Gough . . . are drumming into the Govt. what a useless policy sitting still with a huge garrison is in this worthless country."

On the 20th he reports:

"The 3rd and 4th Battalions have arrived, so we now have about 2000 regular troops here, of which 500 are mounted. We are on active service scale now. No tents, and we draw rations just like in South Africa . . . and live in shelters made of branches and grass. We have now been one month up here waiting, and there seems no prospect of doing anything decisive one way or another. . . . The best time for fighting, from our point of view, is rapidly slipping away, as the rains break in about six weeks from now."

Another month of inaction followed, and on the 20th March he writes:

"Not the slightest sign of a forward move. . . . We

have now been up here for two months on active service conditions, stagnating in zaribas, and not a dervish within 40 miles. The water up here is simply putrid and is beginning to tell on fellows—2 officers are being sent down to the coast to-morrow sick, one for home. The water is green and strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen. The rains are due in a month, and I am inclined to think that all the foreign troops will return to Burao during the rainy season, leaving the Political Officers, Dansey and myself, to carry on operations with Somali levies!”

During this period of stagnation the only report of hopeful augury on the coast had been to the effect that the Mullah's agent at Aden had returned from Mecca bearing a letter from Muhammad Saleh, his old teacher and reputed head of the sect to which he professed to belong, denouncing the Mullah's brutalities, accusing him of being a religious impostor whose sole ambition was to become Sultan of the Somali coast, and warning him unless he reformed, that letters disowning him and his ways would be sent to rouse the neighbouring tribes against him.

The value of this document to the British cause would, however, depend on the extent to which the Mullah might succeed in keeping its contents to himself.

Meanwhile the problem of the continued maintenance of the force in the interior was beginning seriously to concern the Inspector-General.

Until the end of April it was possible to rely for its supply upon the camel transport levied from the tribes; but during the hot weather, from May to September, the Somalis would require the camels for their own use, and it would be necessary either to purchase camels locally or introduce one or more organised camel corps from India. The alternatives which Colonel Gough considered were based on the formation of a reserve of four months' consumable stores at Burao for all troops in the country. II that were possible, and a force had to be maintained in the



Ain Valley after the end of June, then two Indian Camel Corps of about 1000 camels each would be required.

The prospect of the expense which would thus have to be incurred if the policy of squeezing out the Mullah were to be pressed to its conclusion, had a most disconcerting effect on His Majesty's Government, or perhaps, one should only say, draw from them a premature disclosure of a policy which had been at the back of their minds since Mr. Winston Churchill's unfortunate and unwelcome visit to the country in 1907, to which reference has been already made.

Lord Crewe's dispatch of 12th March marks doubtless the determining point of the new policy, and it is also of importance by its disclosure of a profound and incomprehensible misconception of the factors on which any enduring policy would have to be based.

"The cost of transport required to maintain troops in present position is so great that His Majesty's Government must reconsider the whole question of their policy in Somaliland." It proceeds to state that a forward movement against the Mullah is quite out of the question, and inquires if, should the Protectorate troops be still further required, they could be maintained at Burao or Sheikh to afford protection to the tribes. It inquires, should a withdrawal from the Protectorate be decided on, if it would be possible to arm the tribes efficiently against the Mullah, whether he might not be expected in his own interests to treat them well, to what extent we were pledged to them, and to what extent they had shown themselves loyal to us.

"In view of the altered circumstances of the case," it continues, "I must now direct your earnest attention to the possibility of arranging to pay subsidy to the Mullah on condition of his good behaviour. I fully appreciate the arguments adduced by you against this course, but possibility of withdrawal alters the whole case. In the event of

withdrawal proving to be necessary, it would plainly be better if such arrangement could be made before withdrawal."

From this dispatch it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Government had definitely decided to withdraw from the country that protection which had been so solemnly pledged to it. Seeing that those pledges were given twenty-four years previously, it is difficult to understand why Captain Cordeaux was consulted on the point in preference to the records of the Colonial Office, to which, no doubt, all memoranda on the subject would have been transferred on the change of administration in 1898. But what is far harder to understand is the continued insistence on the payment of hush-money to the Mullah. Hush-money was what it was. "You refrain from showing us up to the contempt of the civilised world and we will pay you well for it," was its appeal. That in itself was a curious attitude, but to imagine that we could keep to his side of the bargain an elusive savage whom we had never, with all the forces we had poured into the country, succeeded in forcing to a fight, was a conception so childish that it is absolutely incomprehensible in a State paper.

Truly anything seemed possible to a Department that could entertain it.

The Commissioner's reply was what might have been expected, but of prior importance was the memorandum on the military situation which Colonel Gough submitted, an extremely lucid and penetrating survey of the difficulties confronting the force under his command.

It must be realised that though the Government were prompt in dispatching the required troops to the country, they were so afraid of their being used to defeat the Mullah, that they anchored them to futility by declining to provide them with the transport necessary if they were to strike a blow. They thus succeeded in fastening a long period of privation and extreme discomfort upon some two

thousand of their own men, at very great expense, without achieving anything whatever.

It is to this question of transport that Colonel Gough first directs attention, explaining that while in the dry season the Somalis remain concentrated about some water, and the burden camels are not required and can be hired out, between 1500 and 2300 a month being thus available, in the rains the camels are required to transport the karias in search of grazing, and very few hired camels are to be had. He therefore urges that immediate steps must be taken if troops are going to be maintained in the country during the rains, as the force had been kept with only sufficient Government transport to carry the immediate regimental necessities and seven days' supplies, and unless transport was forthcoming all the troops in the country would be anchored in Burao, and all pretence of protecting the tribes from the Ain Valley would have to be abandoned. He points out that, kept as he has been without the essential transport, nothing but a pretence has been possible—"any chance of striking a really effective blow is practically nil." He puts the force immediately with the Mullah at between 4000 and 6000 men, with 1200 rifles and 800 to 1500 ponies, and, elsewhere, at 250 horsemen, 800 rifles, and spearmen in abundance. He does not believe that the loyalty of the 6th Battalion K.A.R. could be relied upon under an acute strain, and considers that the tribes, left to themselves, are incapable of protecting themselves from the slightest raids.

"The best way of guarding the tribes would be to take offensive action against the Dervishes," he concludes. . . . "Even with the troops at present in the country, we could do far more to protect the tribes temporarily if we had sufficient transport to enable us to strike a blow ■ opportunity offered."

The Commissioner reiterates the request for transport, and is very definite as to what would happen should the lack of it cause a withdrawal from the Ain. "If the Mullah

were to advance as we retire, we could not protect our tribes for long from Burao and Sheikh, and much less from Berbera. The most we could do would be to arm them as we retired, in the hope that they would protect themselves, but they are so naturally lacking in cohesion, and have become so dependent on our support, that I doubt whether they could combine to resist organised attacks, but would be defeated and absorbed in detail. . . . They have for the most part been in loyal co-operation . . . and their apathy is due more to their reliance on us to protect them in case of danger, than to any disloyalty to us or leaning towards the Mullah, whom they have now learned by experience to hate and fear. I do not hesitate to say withdrawal in face of an actively hostile Mullah would be disastrous not only to our tribes, but also to our prestige throughout north-east Africa."

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE WINGATE MISSION.

FROM April 1909 we may consider the fate of Somaliland as determined upon by the Home Government. They had done their best to persuade Captain Cordeaux and Colonel Gough, the two men in a position to speak with authority, to propheesy smooth things concerning their policy, but they had on this occasion to deal with men who had retained the simple habit of describing things as they were, and whose views were consequently in uncompromising opposition to those of His Majesty's Ministers.

Captain Cordeaux, the most competent administrator that Somaliland had known, had, as was his duty, to further schemes with which he had no sympathy, but he conceived it not inconsistent with that duty to speak his mind, and that mind declared most emphatically how impracticable was the policy for which the Home Government were endeavouring to obtain some sort of backing from the men on the spot.

"The difficulties of carrying out an evacuation would be so great," wrote the Commissioner, "and, even if successfully carried out, its after effects would be so serious, that, in my opinion, this solution of the question could only be adopted in the last resort, after every other expedient had been tried." And again, "As I have already remarked, the question of an evacuation presents so many difficulties that I do not consider that it would be materially affected one way or the other by the present military occupation. In fact, I do not think that an evacuation would be possible at any time or under any circumstances until the Mullah's

power has been finally broken either by the present measures, or by a successful expedition."

Colonel Gough's views on the utter inability of the friendly tribes to protect themselves, should our support be withdrawn, has been already quoted.

It is thus plain that in adopting the policy of evacuation, which was attended with such appalling consequences for the people of the country, the Government was not only unsupported by the opinion of the local authorities, but had that opinion expressed against their intentions in the most uncompromising manner. No tincture of the stain from the two awful years of murderous cruelty to which the unfortunate country was to be delivered can fall upon the shoulders of the Commissioner or the Inspector-General. They did their best to save the Government from the crime they contemplated, and it was not from lack of plain speaking that they failed.

It is extremely probable that the very moment had arrived at which, had the Government permitted themselves to be influenced by their responsible advisers, a final and completely successful blow might have been dealt to the Mullah's influence. The pressure which for months had been put from two directions upon him had reduced him to the direst straits, the continuance of the dry season robbed him of any power to improve his position, and the denunciations of Muhammad Saleh had subdued his spirit and shaken the confidence of the tribesmen in his divine mission.

By the middle of April the Warsangli, throttled by the blockade, were offering to make their peace with the Government, and sever their connection with the Mullah. A few days later, 400 men with horses and rifles, under the Mullah's brother-in-law, deserted from him, reporting that the Mullah had lost heart, and that general disaffection had been caused among the Dervishes by Muhammad Saleh's letter.

II Colonel Gough had been possessed of the means which

had been denied him to strike a blow at the broken and discarded leader at this utmost ebb of his fortunes, which had brought those about him to the verge of starvation, a final end might have been made to his interference with our affairs.

But as so often happens to men "who either fear their fate too much or whose deserts are small," the very crisis which promised victory was chosen by them for the perpetration of a blunder which was to set the Mullah on his feet again and once more subject Somaliland to the tyranny of his dominion.

Without patience and without courage, their minds made up to a pusillanimous retirement, the Home Government committed themselves to a supreme stupidity. Unable to induce either of the men on the spot to prophesy the particular peace that would suit their plans, they imported General Sir Reginald Wingate and Slatin Pasha to report on the situation.

The particular report which they required was made unblushingly clear:

"Faced with the difficulties of the situation as a whole . . . a great body of opinion is tending more and more to incline with favour towards a policy of complete evacuation, or, as an alternative, to a withdrawal to certain positions on the coast. Evacuation or such a withdrawal would in themselves be satisfactory to His Majesty's Government if, after consideration of the pros and cons, you should recommend either one or other of these lines of action."

A broader hint of an acceptable finding was surely never given; indeed, it is made pretty plain by the terms of reference that none outside of that alternative would be considered.

For the rest, admission is made that so far as its effect on our pledges to the tribes and their unhappy future is concerned, the Government realised that "coastal concentra-

tion" would be as disastrous as complete withdrawal, and even from the point of our selfish and pecuniary interests, might have nothing to commend it, and a worthy tribute is paid to Captain Cordeaux' loyal efforts to carry out a distasteful policy.

"Captain Cordeaux, who possesses a unique knowledge of the Somali question, has carried out for several months a most difficult and thankless task with conspicuous ability, and has pursued with absolute loyalty the policy prescribed by His Majesty's Government."

"Recognising, as I fully do," writes the Secretary of State to the Commissioner, when announcing Sir R. Wingate's appointment, "what an anxious and ungrateful task you have had to perform for several months, I am more than usually desirous that you should have no ground for thinking that I do not properly appreciate the services which you have so loyally and ably rendered."

That, and indeed the whole of Lord Crewe's extremely courteous letter, is sufficient refutation of the statement that there was any coincidence on the point at issue between Captain Cordeaux' view and the policy of His Majesty's Government. But, most assuredly, no objections that Captain Cordeaux could have entertained towards the policy he had been required to execute could have equalled those he must have felt towards this scheme for negotiating with a rebel whose influence had almost vanished, as though he still possessed the power to which he had once the excuse to lay claim.

It is not too much to say that this sending of a person of the Sirdar's importance to supersede the British representative and treat with a now discredited impostor, invested the Mullah with a renewed importance which alone in that hour could have saved his cause from extinction. The anxiety of the Government to obtain in any manner possible some support for the withdrawal which they contemplated thus undid the work of years, and revitalised an intolerable situation from which with the least help of pertinacity and



understanding on their part the country might have been freed.

The selection of Slatin Pasha to accompany the Sirdar was also about the most unfortunate selection which could have been made, as would have been discovered had local opinion been consulted.

While these events were progressing on the coast, inaction was continuing its mischief in the Ain Valley. Owing to a recommendation in Colonel Gough's memorandum that attention should be paid to the route from Berbera to El Afweina, as a possible line of advance against the Northern Warsangli, we find Corfield writing from Burao on 11th April: "I am down here en route for Las Dureh to issue some 200 rifles to the tribes on the north coast between Berbera and Las Khorai. I leave here to-morrow and go back direct to Eil Dab via Waridad."

He was back at Burao on the 20th, having armed the tribes along the coast; and having suffered a good deal from the exceptionally heavy rains, from which, since his rapid movement would allow of no form of transport, he was quite unprotected, getting drenched every night.

His next letter comes from Eil Dab on 8th May, and reports the arrival of the Sirdar and Slatin Pasha in the country, and the current opinion that very little would come of their mission, which was naturally not popular with the permanent staff. How easy a blow at the Mullah would have been at that moment is indicated by his account of a brush 200 of the scouts had at Halin with the Dervishes, killing 25 men and capturing 800 camels, with a loss of only 6 men killed and 10 ponies.

"Regular troops are still at a standstill at Wadamago and this place," he continues, "and are getting very fed up. Very heavy rains the last month, which is not pleasant, as none of us have tents."

On the 16th he writes:

"The Mullah has climbed down and returned some of

the looted stock and has expressed willingness to return remainder, and says he only wants peace!! The word 'peace' is really good in connection with him, merely meaning he has been frightened by our preparations, and wants to ward off an expedition. The Govt. will now jump at this chance and will thus expose to the Mullah how weak and adverse to an expedition we really are. . . . The rains are nearly over, and the first of the kharif is starting, so I hope some decision is come to soon, as we are very uncomfortable at present."

The exposure to which the troops had been so needlessly subjected during such a prolonged period, camped for months under miserable conditions, beside foul water, at the mercy of the elements, told at last on his splendid constitution.

He writes from Wadamago on 30th May:

"I was bowled over with a nasty dose of malaria, and have been laid up for the last fortnight. I was brought down here ten days ago, but am up and about again now although feeling a bit weak. . . . Gough has been invalided . . . and leaves Berbera on Tuesday. He is a great loss. Please understand that I'm perfectly fit now and back at work again."

On the 5th June he reported having moved his camp from Eil Dab to Shire Ooa. Eil Dab being a very bad place for mosquitoes and malaria at that time of year.

"We have had exceptionally heavy rains, and there is a great deal of malaria about. Wingate and Slatin are still here waiting for a reply to their letter to the Mullah. We expected an answer by 20th May, but up to date have not heard a word."

He goes on to relate the current opinion, which was to obtain such striking confirmation, that the Wingate mission had been already attended with the most deplorable results, upsetting the administration of the country, creating, as was inevitable, an impression in the Mullah's mind that

the policy of the Commissioner and Inspector-General was discredited by the Home Government, and that Slatin Pasha, of all men in the world, had been sent to treat with the rebels over their heads.

"As far as the Mullah goes, he had climbed down, sent in 200 camels with promises of the remainder, and sources more or less reliable asserted he was going to flit to the Webbe Shebele country, when Slatin insisted on sending his extraordinarily conciliatory and weak letter, practically telling the Mullah that Wingate and himself had been sent by the Brit. Govt. to judge between Cordeaux and the Mullah. . . . What's going to happen now I don't know, everything is at a standstill till he answers Slatin's letter. It is now thirty-eight days since it left. It's an awful snub for him being ignored like this by the Mullah, after his conciliatory letter."

He writes on 27th June of an important service he had to perform.

"I have had to convey a deputation from the Mullah down to Sheikh, where the Khedivial Party, Wingate Slatin and Co., were waiting for them. . . . I had to take the Dervishes direct to their camp, as W. and Co. were anxious to be off. They had been waiting three weeks for these people, with a cruiser waiting for them at Berbera—rather *infra dig.* . . . Dansey and I brought 'em up-country again, and they leave here to-morrow for the Mullah. . . . Sir Reg. Wingate . . . wrote me a very nice letter thanking me for my trouble in bringing the messengers down. . . . I think, after all, their mission may do good, as they left the country with their illusions about the Mullah completely broken: to wit, that he was a great religious fanatic, like the Mahdi, with the possibilities of wielding enormous power in the Muhammedan world. They now realise, I think, that he is little better than a raiding cattle thief, glorified by the continued deplorable weakness of the Government. I am inclined to think that now, after seeing





Wingate, the Government will be forced into seeing that the only solution is action.

"A mobile force of 2000 rifles, 500 mounted, exclusive of Somali irregulars, has now been sitting in the Ain Valley since January, 150 miles from the base, Berbera, costing the Govt. nearly £10,000 a month and doing absolutely *nothing*. That is, the Govt., by what they call 'pursuing a defensive policy,' have spent £50,000 of additional money and achieved absolutely nothing, and never will at the present game.

"As far as our prestige goes amongst the natives, harm even has been done since the arrival of the troops, because, when they landed, every native believed the Govt. meant business, and so did the Mullah; now, however, by our inactivity every one believes the Govt. afraid, and so does the Mullah. It is impossible to make a Somali believe more than he sees, and he cannot realise the resources of England, and never will till she smashes the Mullah. Fever has been exceptionally bad this year, and the mosquitoes and water in this valley are damnable. I myself am keeping pretty fit; curiously enough the Somalis, natives of the country, seem to suffer from fever more than the foreign troops, Yaos, Soudanese, and Indian; nearly 40 per cent. of the 6th Batt. K.A.R. (Somalia) being off duty a short time ago."

Corfield's appreciation of what was happening errs on the side of moderation, a full understanding of the ruin which had been wrought was possible to the Commissioner alone. He had used all his influence to obtain for the troops in the country that measure of mobility which would render them of some use. "He (Colonel Gough) considers that the effectiveness of the troops as a striking force is much impaired by existing transport difficulties, and that these difficulties will become so serious within the next few weeks as to render the immediate dispatch of Indian transport essential to the maintenance of the troops in their present positions. In these views I entirely concur, and have

accordingly urged his requirements should be met as soon as possible."

But no urgings, either of the chief political officer or of the General commanding the troops, were of the least avail. It was only too evident that the immobility of Colonel Gough's force exactly suited the Home Government. That force had been sent into the country merely as a preventive, and with the distinct understanding that it should do nothing; and when, owing to the season, it was rendered more impotent than it had been during all the months of its trying inactivity, the Government, always afraid of the zeal of its subordinates, was proportionately relieved.

A more deplorable object-lesson of the pusillanimity of the Government could not be imagined than was furnished by those unfortunate troops in the Ain. Kept there month after month, in the most miserable discomfort, with only a shelter of grass and thorns from the tropic sun, the torrential rain, and the fury of the kharif, with the foulest of water to drink and the meagrest of provisions, with an insolent enemy within striking distance whom they were forbidden to attack, and nothing to do day after day as the year wore on, and one inclement season succeeded to another, but to marvel at the weakness of the great British Government which had not the courage to strike at a discredited rebel and his disillusioned followers a few miles away.

The Secretary for the Colonies had asked Sir Reginald Wingate to consider that a failure to deal effectually with the Mullah might "be disastrous for British influence outside Somaliland itself. On the Juba River, the frontier of the East Africa Protectorate, there are powerful and turbulent Somali tribes, and if once they were set in motion by the Mullah the consequences might be most serious for the East Africa Protectorate, while our prestige in the other countries in North-East Africa, such as the Soudan and Uganda, might be injuriously affected."

This concern for what the Mullah's success might mean ■ incomprehensible when compared with the same Minister's indifference to the results of the Government's failure. They had gathered a force from these very provinces, from Aden—as dangerous as any, from Uganda, Nyasaland, the East Africa Protectorate; a force, as Corfield had said, “composed of every African native under the sun.” They had called these men from their homes and countries at a moment's notice, equipped them for active service, transported them across thousands of miles, hurried them up into the wilderness as though for instant action, and then left them for seven months to acquire disease, eat their hearts out with inactivity, and curse the cowardice of the Government which had collected a force from the ends of Africa, and did not dare to strike with it the rebel that flouted them.

Strange, indeed, that Lord Crewe was not concerned for what these men might say when they returned to their homes to recount, not the adventures expected of them, but the incredible fate which had been theirs.

There was not a corner of the countries that they came from to which they would not carry the news of what had happened, deep-printed by the wretchedness they had undergone. These men were fighters, with the primal instinct of their race for scorning a coward. They knew that for all those months the Mullah had been but a few marches away. They had to listen to the stories of defeats which mere Somali scouts were able to inflict on his Dervishes, while they, the fighting men, were denied a sight of him.

They knew that he was growing weaker, that his men were deserting him, that in a little while he would slink away out of reach. Yet still they were forced to sit there beside the foul water, as utterly useless for any military purpose as though they had been left in their own villages thousands of miles away.

Was it surprising that these men should describe by the



one word that explained it, such an inconceivable piece of stupidity? That when they returned to their own homes they should spread the news that the great British Government were afraid to fight the man they had gone out to meet.

Surely no means deliberately calculated to impair our prestige in Africa could have equalled the effectiveness of this climax of flaccidity.

No wonder that the white men forced to witness it, fretted their hearts out, and lost their health, and spoke the bitterness of humiliation that burned within them.

And the pity of it all was that had the Cabinet possessed but a grain of the black man's courage, they might have freed the land for ever at that most auspicious moment of the incubus that oppressed it.

Retribution for the neglect of such an opportunity followed as rapidly as is its wont.

The Mullah took the measure of the Wingate Mission. He exploited it to his own satisfaction. His reply, when at last it was sent, was a mere mockery of British weakness, of which he had once again been so gratefully convinced.

The Sirdar's telegram on the conclusion of negotiations was brief indeed:

"Envoy and his master pretend to be quite ignorant of political matters; . . . they are, therefore, very difficult to deal with. Although he is apparently desirous of peace, it is next to impossible to see how his demands can be entertained."

Nevertheless the negotiations were continued, and the Mullah gave a last taste of his contempt by taking no further notice of them. It had amused him sufficiently that the British Government should send its Sirdar to abase himself and sue for terms from a declared impostor, and incidentally to humble the man who had always proved himself the Mullah's master in craft and courage.

So he sent an envoy to laugh at the Sirdar, but declined

to trouble his head with his communications further. He left them unanswered, and England waiting with its hat in one hand and the old bag of blood-money in the other. Captain Cordeaux' refusal to have anything to do with bribes for the Mullah had not altered Lord Crewe's conviction as to the advantage which a bribe offered when dealing with a rebel, especially to a people like ourselves with more money than determination.

"The policy of subsidising the Mullah" is once again urged, in the instructions to General Wingate. But that is, for a season, the last we hear of it. Doubtless the Sirdar had something forcible and convincing to say upon the subject, or perhaps the Mullah's utter contempt of the Government's overtures proved too much for the Secretary of State.

Meanwhile the methods employed by the Mission to obtain information were rousing official resentment throughout the Protectorate. It was no wonder that the Somalis gained the impression that the entire administration, from the Commissioner downwards, was going to be dismissed from the service of the Government, and a new set of officials under a member of the Mission was going to be introduced.

Under the circumstances, as was natural, the Somalis indulged to the full their Hibernian inclination to say the thing supposed to be pleasing to the inquirer, with no advantage to the investigation of the question, but with the most deplorable effects to British prestige in the country and the future relations of the rulers and the ruled.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### STAGNATION.

By the beginning of July, Corfield was back in Wadamago.

"I suppose we shall remain inactive another 2 months," he writes, "while the Govt. cogitate over Wingate's report. We have now been six months doing nothing under service conditions, and everyone, even the keenest soldier here, is so fed up they don't care now if the Govt. decide on an expedition or not. It is a great pity, as the K.A. Rifle battalions arrived here as keen as mustard, but 6 months doing nothing on Govt. rations, water impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen, and the kharif have taken the bounce out of 'em.

"Every question, both of internal and external policy, is in abeyance now till the Govt. have seen Wingate's report, and as far as we (the civil officials up country) go, it is having a disastrous effect on our prestige. . . . This, of course, in a country like this, in which the natives have never been licked, the country having been acquired by treaty, and consequently where one has to depend on one's personal influence, has had a most disastrous effect on our administration. . . . People will not realise that it is not a religious question in Somaliland now, but merely the suppression of a very troublesome border raider . . . who is a cattle thief first, a Somali second, and thirdly, and a long way last, a very indifferent Mahomedan. The latest is that he has hanged one of Wingate's messengers, who was sick and had to be left behind in the Mullah's camp when the others returned. That's the sort of insult (viz.,

the murder of an accredited Govt. agent) that the Home Govt. sit down quietly under and then wonder why the Somali despises us!"

He has nothing to report for the rest of the month save that "the kharif this year is too beastly for words. I have never seen it so strong. One of the biggest men with the Mullah, Farah Segulleh, deserted and came in to us this week. We are simply passing the time away doing nothing."

A week later he relates on a rumour from home, that "there wasn't the slightest, smallest possible chance of any active policy being pursued. The most we can hope for is that they'll sanction a permanent garrison and hold the Ain Valley and Eil Dab. Pending orders from home, every other man from the column is on sick leave."

On the 1st August he has to chronicle a sudden dash to the scene of a tribal fight, covering between Sunday and Wednesday 130 miles on a camel; despite the fact that he was still suffering from relapses of malaria and had to be put on a quinine diet.

He had come to the conclusion that the Government never meant to tackle the Mullah, and, fond as he was of the country, the unspeakably depressing experiences, moral and physical, of the past year, and the contempt into which the rule of England had been brought, made him anxious to obtain a transfer on promotion.

He tells a good story to illustrate the feeling prevalent in that unfortunate field force.

"Some half a dozen fellows have been invalided lately, and a lot more would like to be, including a doctor who came up with one of the K.A.R. battalions.

"He, the doctor, was suddenly called to Eil Dab to see a fellow who was very bad with malaria. He took his temperature, and on looking at the thermometer thus comfortably spoke to the sick man, in a very slow big voice he has.

"'Good God! I wish I had your temperature!'"

On the 8th August he writes:

"We have not heard a word, official or private, since Wingate and Slatin left on 20th June. They (the Colonial Office) have had a month or more to cogitate over the Commission's report, and, I suppose, still remain in the same state of painful indecision. An expedition seems anathema to them, so they've only two courses left—(1) To occupy the country we are at present holding by a permanent garrison, declare the Mullah an enemy of the Govt., break off all negotiations, allowing our tribes to carry on an irregular campaign against him, and thus gradually wear him down; or (2) chuck it.

"The cream of the jest at present is that although the Mullah raids our so-called protected tribes indiscriminately, the troops lie idle, and our tribes are *forbidden by Govt.* to retaliate on the Mullah, for fear of prejudicing chances of negotiation. Isn't that rich? As far as negotiations are concerned, one might as well make an agreement with a mule not to kick you."

This, a week later:

"The Mullah raided about 50 miles from here a few days ago, killing some of our *protected* tribes, and driving off a great quantity of stock. On hearing the news we in the approved fashion said, Did he? and did nothing."

The most remarkable quality in Richard Corfield's letters at this trying period is their restraint, especially when compared with the fluency and freedom with which others, by no means so badly hit by the Government's policy, expressed their opinions.

Humour was in Corfield's mind like the tortoise of Indian legend on which stood the elephant which supported the world. On that broad moving base of humour rested the genial gravity on which his world was borne. He thus acquired the quiet acceptance of fate which brought his temperament so much into touch with that of the Muhammadan people.

He could blaze with anger at what he judged meanness and dishonour, but he was very difficult to ruffle with adverse fortune.

Though suffering from the exasperation of weakness that malaria leaves behind, crushed in spirit by being forced to play a part so incompatible with a white man's self-respect, his letters maintain an extraordinary moderation, even in those dreadful days of surrender, when shame and rage at the perfidy which was being perpetrated might well have been pleaded in excuse of anything that he might say.

And even what he wrote was written with the certainty that it would be read only by the one to whom it was addressed.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE MISSING REPORT.

THE events from September demand a new chapter.

On the 2nd, a telegram from the Secretary of State to the Commissioner at last discloses definitely the determination of the Home Government:

"The question of our future policy in Somaliland has been under my consideration, and while it is not practicable at present, or perhaps desirable, to outline that policy in full, I am of opinion that if it is to have any stability the principle on which it must be based is that of inducing the friendly tribes to take a more active part in their own defence.

"There is no doubt that during the last few months the Mullah has been considerably discredited, and the friendly tribes have shown on more than one occasion that they can hold their own against his raiding parties. It seems probable that if they were given to understand that they must rely more upon their own exertions, they would be able with a certain amount of military support from the Government, to make still greater headway against the Mullah, and perhaps in time they would be able to dispense with Government support altogether."

In consequence of this decision, the telegram continues, the military force in Somaliland is to be cautiously reduced, and the tribes are to "have more responsibility thrown upon them in the settlement of their own tribal questions."

Here, then, were the Government's intentions at last revealed. On what were they founded? By this time there

had been ample leisure to read and consider Sir Reginald Wingate's report. What was the gist of it? To that one has still to demand an answer. The Sirdar was sent to Somaliland to make a recommendation on which the Government's policy could be ostensibly based. There is no concealment of that intention. The Government wanted cover. They had determined to clear out of the country: they had declared "that a great body of opinion"—though Heaven alone knew where, outside the Cabinet, was either the greatness or the body of it—"is tending more and more to incline with favour towards a policy of complete evacuation."

His Majesty's Ministers had evidently inclined so far towards it that the daylight of indecision was no longer to be seen between them and it, but they had looked in vain for any one on whom to unload the blame, if, when that policy were adopted, the threatened nemesis should appear.

No one in Somaliland would consent to serve, so the Sirdar was shipped there with instructions which would enable him to be used as scapegoat if the occasion required.

There was no concealment about it. He was told that an organised campaign was out of the question, and that evacuation or withdrawal to the coast "would be satisfactory to His Majesty's Government."

It is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that had he recommended either of the courses "satisfactory to His Majesty's Government" we should have heard something more about it, and it also seems possible that had he declined the alternatives offered him, had, that is, his report confirmed the views of the men on the spot, his report would have been carefully consigned to oblivion.

That apparently is what has become of it. Sir Reginald Wingate is introduced with great pomp into the Somaliland problem, but he leaves it in a silence so deep as almost to make audible the consternation of those who thrust it upon him.



For four months the report of General Wingate loomed very large, blocking for that critical period all pretence to a policy. The Secretary of State was gratified he had expressed his willingness to write it; its necessity to His Majesty's Government before taking a decision was explained to the Commissioner; nothing could be done up-country or down-country until it had been received; the troops in their miserable bivouacs waited anxiously to hear the worst from it; the political administration of the country hung in abeyance on its recommendations.

Then, at the crisis of expectation, it disappeared. Even that, perhaps, is too much to say of it, since there is no evidence, so far as the Blue Book is concerned, that it was ever written.

If it ever was, the conclusion is a fair one that His Majesty's Ministers were unable to extract from its recommendations the slightest encouragement for the policy they intended to pursue.

Had there been a single phrase in General Wingate's report which could be construed in favour of evacuation, they would most certainly have made the most of it; and the fact that not a single reference is made to the report after it had been received, and that its findings have been rigidly excluded from the Blue Book, seemed to warrant the conclusion that its counsel coincided on the main issue with that of the Commissioner and Inspector-General which had been so conspicuously rejected.

One feels, therefore, completely justified in representing the responsibility for the evacuation of the interior and all the horrors which followed in its train as resting entirely on the shoulders of the Ministers who ordered it in opposition to the expressed views of every man qualified to form an opinion.

Lord Crewe's telegram of 2nd September, which has been already quoted, paving the way with unwarranted optimism for the new policy, had not long to wait for its

refutation, since on the same day that he was writing that "the friendly tribes have shown . . . that they can hold their own against his (the Mullah's) raiding parties," Captain Cordeaux was penning a dispatch describing the attack on one of our advanced posts held by thirty native irregulars by a party of 200 Dervishes, who killed thirteen and captured numerous rifles and stores. The Commissioner added significantly that though according to his orders he had maintained a strictly defensive attitude, "it should be understood that our forced inaction has already had a very depressing effect both on our friendly tribes and on the tribes who have recently deserted to us, and, if continued in the face of recent aggressions, the latter are likely to re-desert, taking some of the former with them."

But the warning, repeated, and repeated, and repeated again, was now at the end of its utility. The policy of treating a rebel cattle thief as a foreign potentate, and solemnly protecting him from the troops which had been gathered for his punishment, had succeeded in rehabilitating him as a leader, and depressing the friendly tribes to the verge of despair.

The Commissioner had to report another Dervish raid on the friendlies near Adad on 9th September, in spite of the presence of a post of fifty native irregulars, and on the following day he replied to Lord Crewe's telegram of the 2nd, pointing out the extremely inaccurate information as to the administration of Somaliland on which its recommendations were based, an incomprehensible ignorance which appears to be a special Colonial Office culture where Somaliland is concerned, and urging that even at that eleventh hour, and despite the Mullah's restored credit, "if we could move slowly down Nogal, our tribes would go forward, many of those with the Mullah would desert, and the Mullah be at least forced to escape south."

The reply to this urgent request was of a character which we used proudly to consider was impossible to an

Englishman. The tribes, who had been held back from retaliation by the orders of our inactive force, were now to be encouraged "to rely upon themselves for their own defence against the Mullah," because, forsooth! "previous experience has shown that self-protective measures on the part of the friendly tribes have proved the most effective means of bringing the Mullah to reason."

Really when statements of such an astounding inaccuracy are used as a basis for policy by a responsible Minister of State, what is there to say further?

To declare that the Mullah had ever been brought to reason could scarcely be called veracious, to describe him as having been brought to reason by self-protective measures of the tribes is the wildest travesty of anything that ever happened.

But though the tribes were to be encouraged to attack the Mullah, they were to understand "that we do not undertake any responsibility for consequences of action taken by them," and in no case was that great idle wilting force in the Ain Valley to advance to their assistance.

To this extraordinary dispatch the Commissioner made the obvious answer that though a certain number of the friendly tribes might still be willing to go forward, "provided they are allowed to retain the impression that a general forward movement on our part is still under consideration, it would be to throw them straight into the Mullah's hands to tell them now that they must rely entirely on their own efforts, whereas if they can first gain some initial success with our moral support they will be encouraged to rely more on their own unaided efforts in future. . . . In my opinion a feint of this nature offers the best chance, short of an actual advance, of dislodging the Mullah, and so relieving the present impasse."

But not even a feint of action was to be permitted. There ■ a point in the culture of folly where the crop has to ■ reaped. His Majesty's Ministers were beginning to

reap it. They could not consent to one course of action without stultifying themselves. They had therefore to sit helpless in the stocks of their paralyzing policy, and watch the dragon's teeth which they had sown, fill the furrows with armed men.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A PARODY OF PROTECTION.

If the process looked somewhat disconcerting to the men responsible for it six thousand miles away, the results were even more unpleasant to the men on the spot who had to face them. "Not a word of any kind up to date from the Colonial Office," writes Corfield on 1st September. "Last week the Mullah sent up a party of 200 men and practically wiped out an advance post of 30 of our men (illaloes—scouts). Still the Govt. don't mind, but talk of negotiations for peace being in progress." As a matter of fact, it was not until the 18th September that the Secretary for State admitted, after two Dervish raids and the murder of Sir R. Wingate's messenger, "that negotiations with the Mullah are hopeless at present." "It's getting rather a ticklish business running the illaloes and intelligence, as our men cannot be expected to continually stand on the defensive waiting for the Mullah's people to pick off any post they take a fancy for, whilst the regular troops remain inactive."

For it must be understood that while the unfortunate illaloes were tied up in small bunches, within a convenient distance of the Mullah, like some poor tethered calf to tempt a tiger, the 2000 regular troops which they were supposed to be protecting had the strictest orders not to interfere on their behalf; indeed, after a further outrage on a Somali outpost, the following telegram was sent by the Secretary of State.

"With reference to the Dervish attack on Yaguri, reported

in your telegram of 5th October, please inform me whether the enemy was driven off or retired spontaneously. Please report number of Dervish casualties. I shall be glad to be informed when the Mounted Company is withdrawn to Badwein."

Truly when the concern of one's Chief is exhibited only for the enemy's casualties, the time to get out of reach of his claws has arrived.

Meanwhile the Secretary of State's anxiety to see the protected tribes do some fighting having to be relieved, Corfield writes from Wadamago on 19th September:

"I've been out at a post of irregular Somalis of ours called Adad. There I was mobilising a large irregular raiding party of our tribes against the Warsangli—finally I got off about 900 men, 300 being riflemen and the rest spearmen. We ought to hear in about a week from now what they have done. I hope they simply wipe out all Warsangli they strike. . . . To-day is Sunday; on Tuesday Dansey and I move up to Badwein, 30 miles farther out E.; the 6th K.A.R. have already gone there. Dervishes last week raiding 7 villages about 18 miles from there, killing ■ men and the women and children and driving off the stock.

"About your remark anent being unable to see anything in the papers, that is a godsend to the Government. The fact is there is not a single white man in this protectorate who is not either an army officer or official, and we are bound not to communicate with the papers. Consequently nothing leaks out. . . . If there was a white population here like East Africa, the Govt. couldn't carry on like this for a moment; public opinion would be too strong. If they agitate about the Congo, how much more should they insist on putting an end to the devastation and gradual extermination of tribes supposed to be protected by us."

On the 25th, from Badwein he has to report the first result of the Secretary of State's determination to encourage

the tribes to attack the Mullah while withholding from them any sort of support.

"This week ■ have had bad news. The large raiding party I sent off from Adad has been badly beaten. They first did well . . . but were overtaken by a much larger force than themselves on the way back . . . our party losing about 70 killed. This week about 250 riflemen start for Geladi. I hope they have better success."

These were the methods Lord Crewe described as "the most effective means of bringing the Mullah to reason."

Before the Commissioner could report the cheering news to the Colonial Office that no Dervishes had been hurt while murdering our men at Yaguri, he had to chronicle an attack made by a party of 200 Dervish horsemen on an Indian Camel Company under Captain Carter, which was proceeding from Badwein on 11th October to relieve the patrol at Adad.

On a dark rainy morning just before dawn the Dervishes, who were mistaken for another company of the K.A.R., and in consequence permitted to approach the column, dashed into the transport, cutting down the rear party of the escort and ham-stringing all the camels. On hearing the firing Captain Carter wheeled his company round and succeeded in driving off the Dervishes, who withdrew slowly, keeping up a running fight.

When Captain Lawrence, with the Mule Company, which was being relieved, arrived, having pressed forward on receiving news of the attack, the pursuit was continued for eight hours, the Mule Company being in the saddle for seventeen hours, from 1 a.m. to 9 p.m., without water and with but one halt of an hour, the pursuit being conducted with stripped saddles. The enemy's superior mobility enabled him, however, to get clear away, with little appreciable loss and without disorder.

Corfield had accompanied the two companies ■ the K.A.R. which sallied out to Gosaweina on receiving news

of the Dervish attack, but without being able to cut off its retirement. "We chased 'em for about 20 miles," concludes his account, "but they had the legs of us, and the firing was all at long ranges. We had no casualties in the pursuit, and we only managed to kill one of them and 4 ponies. . . . It was a piping hot day, and by the time we got back we were all pretty well cooked."

On 23rd October he writes of a move forward to Jidbali, the scene of General Egerton's victory. "We being the 6th K.A. Rifles, an Indian Camel Company, and about 1000 Somali irregulars. The Infantry, 1st, 3rd, and 4th Battalions K.A.R., move behind us to Badwein and Yaguri. What will be the upshot, I don't know; the Government won't, I'm afraid, let us go far, and the Mullah won't be such a fool as to meet us, so quite possibly the same boring 'impasse' may continue; on the other hand, if our irregulars go on and get in touch, we may manage something decisive."

This was the first attempt on a large scale made to carry out the recommendation of the Colonial Office that the friendlies should be encouraged to do their own fighting; but the friendlies proved sharp enough to see through the manoeuvre. They had served all through the year as a chopping-block for the Mullah, and were now of the opinion that it was about time that the soldiers who had been reputedly summoned from the ends of the earth for their protection should take a hand in the game. This, however, being quite contrary to British notions of fair play, as voiced by the Secretary of State, the particular purpose in the country of the troops was explained to the friendlies.

As that, however, seemed unconvincing to their simple souls, they withdrew from the expedition and even threatened an attack on the British camp, and it was due almost entirely to Corfield's coolness and influence with the tribesmen that they were prevented from firing and a most horrible butchery averted.

After that final episode, the farce which the Government



had been playing in Somaliland ended. While the Commissioner was writing an account of it, the Secretary of State was committing to the telegraph the Government's determined policy which was to introduce a new and terrible chapter to the history of the country.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### EVACUATION.

ON 12th November 1909, Lord Crewe telegraphed to the Commissioner the decision of His Majesty's Government to withdraw all troops from the Protectorate—"the object being to pursue a policy of coastal concentration and to limit our administration entirely to the holding of the two or three important towns on the coast by small garrisons sufficient to ensure their safety."

About such a policy there were several things to be said.

It was first of all an absolute betrayal of the promises we had given to the tribes, promises incorporated in the very name Protectorate. We had guaranteed their protection when there was nothing to protect them from: as soon as there was something, we withdrew the guarantee. That consideration was apparently of no concern to His Majesty's Ministers.

Secondly, by withdrawal we were, and knew we were, delivering over tens of thousands of innocent people, men, women, and children, whose only fault was to have trusted us, to the tender mercies of an utterly ruthless and brutal fanatic who had already been guilty of unspeakable atrocities.

Thirdly, the towns it was proposed to occupy not only had no grip upon the country, but could not themselves be held if seriously threatened.

The policy was thus not only a breach of faith, but it could not be regarded as a permanent settlement, or indeed as anything but an expedient for saving a few pounds for

a few years at the cost of a most grisly sacrifice of human life, and a reckless waste of national reputation.

There is no need here for further comment. Time was going to supply that, and a report on his finding was to be written in yet another Blue Book.

But there still remained to the Government a certain amount of humane consideration, or at least, since it vanished so soon, a sense of the necessity for seeming to possess it.

On 18th December, Lord Crewe telegraphed to the Commissioner: "Evacuation of the interior with a view to coastal concentration is not to be carried out unless and until friendly tribes can reasonably be said to be in a position to hold their own against the Mullah or to be free from risk of serious attack by him. It is improbable that you will have an opportunity of carrying out this part of the policy before appointment of your successor."

It was, indeed, extremely improbable. The Government apparently realised that with such a proviso the evacuation of Somaliland could not be proceeded with so long as Captain Cordeaux remained at Berbera. A man of his knowledge and integrity would never, after the withdrawal of armed force from the Protectorate, have reported that the friendly tribes could "reasonably be said to be in a position to hold their own against the Mullah."

With that condition blocking the way it was plain that Captain Cordeaux must be superseded. He was superseded. Captain Cordeaux had been in succession at Berbera, Assistant Resident, Vice-Consul, Sub-Commissioner and Consul, Deputy-Commissioner, Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief; and what was unknown to him about Somaliland was known to no one. He was in consequence the very man, nay, the only man, whose opinion on the auspicious moment for evacuation could be safely trusted. He had been in Somaliland from the hour of the Mullah's appearance on the scene; as our representative in Berbera he had, despite the vacillation of the men behind him, stood

for all those things which we still pride ourselves are British virtues: no man in that distracted country ever needed other bond than his word; even by his enemies he was trusted as well as feared. The Political Officers knew him to be conversant with their every difficulty, and a bulwark to be relied upon ■ they needed backing. The soldiers found his local knowledge invaluable and their requirements foreseen by his military training.

Why, then, was such a man removed from his post at this most critical moment, when the change of policy might, as the Government's own precautions confessed, bring about a dangerous condition of anarchy?

To that there can be but one reply. The Government knew that under the circumstances which they were creating, Captain Cordeaux would never report the friendly tribes in a position to hold their own against the Mullah—since they never had been in such a case, and probably never would be. Hence, as a preliminary, it was necessary to get rid of the Commissioner, and appoint some one in his place with less experience and a consequent ability to take more optimistic views.

It will no doubt have been noted that, though the Government had had months in which to make up their minds, though doubtless for months they *had* made up their minds, their most serious decision to evacuate the country was communicated not in a grave state paper, but by a curt telegram, though there was no pretence even of a cause for hurry.

Captain Cordeaux's reply to that telegram finds no place in the Blue Book. We may presume that he did reply, since the telegram contained also an offer of "promotion." It is therefore not unfair to infer that the matter of his reply was of a character so unpleasant to the Government's plans, and so destructive to their intentions, that they preferred not to disclose it.

The only reply that Captain Cordeaux makes in the

Blue Book is indeed a sufficiently grim reflection on the Secretary of State's cheery confidence in the capacity of the friendly tribes to deal with the Mullah.

"*January 7.*—Friendly Dolbahanta tribes at Yaguri recently attacked by party of Dervish horsemen, killing 11 men and 4 women, and carrying off 200 camels; 100 mounted friendlies went in pursuit, but raiders could not be overtaken.—CORDEAUX.

"*January 29.*—Following raids on friendly tribes have occurred since the raid reported in my telegram of January 7th.

"1. *January 18.*—Thirteen villages raided about 10 miles west of Yaguri. Six men and 3 women killed, and 100 camels taken.

"2. *January 23.*—Twenty-five villages raided at Hanik, 21 men killed, and 23,000 sheep, 550 camels, 5 rifles and all ammunition issued by Government captured.

"3. *January 23.*—Three villages, and one caravan raided at Bohotleh. Eight men killed and all camels and cattle destroyed. Bohotleh remains in occupation of raiding party.—CORDEAUX."

That is the last time, so far as one knows, that Captain Cordeaux's name is signed to a dispatch from Somaliland. What a withering commentary on Lord Crewe's views of the future is the simple directness of that list of outrages to which the Commissioner does not deign to add a word.

Already the Government's effeminacy had begun to work its irreparable mischief. The Mullah had learnt from his spies everywhere of plans made and matured for the withdrawal of the troops. The projected flight of the British from the country had already been whispered across its length and breadth. The last restraining bar that penned the flood of lawless brutality had been removed, the Mullah was once more master and hell had been let loose.

Sir William Manning, who had seen, from 1902 to 1904, such strenuous service in Somaliland, had been selected to

conduct the evacuation, but before he arrived an interlude occurred to which the Blue Book makes no reference, General de Brath being sent across from Aden to confer with the Commissioner; meeting him, with Lt.-Col. J. A. Hannington, who had taken over from Colonel Gough the command of the troops, and Captain C. E. Dansey, the Chief Political Officer. The object of the conference was apparently to arrange for the replacing of the King's African Rifles by an Indian battalion. It was, perhaps, thought inadvisable to let men who were serving in other parts of Africa into the secret of British policy in the Horn. The discretion was no doubt a wise one, but what a homily on what was being done.

General Manning arrived at the end of January; his first report to the Colonial Office was on 1st February to announce that "Ogaden tribes, under Abyssinians, made a raid in Hargeisa District, and looted 1000 camels. This raid is not directly due to the influence of the Mullah, but to the uncertainty prevailing among the Somalis generally as to our policy." He also forwarded the report that Farah Mahmud had been surprised and killed by Dervishes.

Farah Muhammad Mijjarten, as his name was more usually written, who had once led the Dervish horse, disgusted by the Mullah's cruelties, had left him and come to serve under Corfield and Captain Dansey, assured by them of British protection. When the troops were withdrawn from the Ain he was caught and brutally murdered.

But all these forerunners of far worse things to happen were quite without effect on His Majesty's Ministers. Like Galileo, they cared for none of them. On 7th February, General Manning telegraphed: "Further raids on our tribes by Somali tribe Abusgul, resident in Abyssinian territory, have been reported. Forty zarebas looted." And again on 16th February:

"On February 12th a raid was made by Bagheri Dervishes ■ miles south of Gadweina, on Habr Yunis'

stock. About 4000 camels were taken. It is reported that four men were killed. The raiding party is said to consist of 350 Dervishes on foot and 12 mounted."

Corfield wrote of this affair from Burao:

"The dickens of a raid has taken place within 10 miles of a Govt. station, Odweina, and whilst Manning the Commissioner was at Odweina, talking to the skils. I'm hanged if they can evacuate in the face of these continual raids, if they dawdle about it much longer. . . . The date fixed for withdrawal, I understand, was 15th March, but I don't know whether Govt. will do it in face of this."

But it all made no difference.

"I do not consider that the chances of the tribes to hold their own in the near future against the Mullah have been diminished by the recent raids," wrote General Manning consolingly.

They had not. It is extremely difficult to diminish that which does not exist.

There are points in General Manning's memorandum of 8th February to which no exception can be taken, it is his deductions from them that were at fault.

He notes, for example, that in place of the single hostile gathering under the Mullah that existed in 1904 there were three separate hostile parties more or less taking their orders from him, and a fourth apparently independent of him. These were the Warsangli, the Bagheri, the Mullah's own Dervishes at the Haroun, and the Ogaden on the Abyssinian border. Raids might therefore be expected in the future not from one point of the compass only, but from the north, the east, the south, the south-west, and west. "The position at first sight is not reassuring, but it is my opinion that such a *decentralisation* of force is in our favour."

It is plain that General Manning ■ regarding the situation almost solely as it concerns Great Britain, and very little as it affects the tribes.

His recommendation that the evacuation should be

completed before the commencement of the rains, as afterwards it would be necessary to keep the troops in the country until the next dry season, gives away the case. He foresees that the hostile tribes are only waiting for the rains to commence raiding, and that ■ we are then in the country we shall have to deal with such raids. He therefore advises that we shall clear out of the country before the raids begin, in order that we cannot be called upon to give any assistance to our "protected" tribes.

The recommendation was entirely to the satisfaction of the Government. Not another word is uttered about the evacuation being delayed until the friendly tribes can "reasonably be said to be in a position to hold their own against the Mullah," or to be free from risk of serious attack from him.

General Manning's report made it clear that neither reasonably nor unreasonably could such things be said, and he frankly states that the tribes most concerned are leaderless, and will certainly remain leaderless until some of them have been slaughtered.

"The Ishak . . . openly acknowledge that they look to Government to lead them. They say that they have fought and can still fight, but that they want a leader. . . . Until they suffer, as it is possible at first they will, no leader will be forthcoming . . . it would appear to be necessary that they are made to suffer by being raided, and that one or two such experiences will bring out the right men."

An optimist has been defined as one who can endure with composure other men's misfortunes, and a pessimist as one who has lived with an optimist. After a few months' acquaintance with the new Commissioner the pessimistic qualification of the Ishak could hardly be challenged.

With all pretences of interest in the friendly tribes abandoned, it became now only a question of getting out of the country before the rains gave the signal for general loot and slaughter. Our measure had been well taken,



the unlimited capacity for surrender of the Government had been gauged, and in such contempt was our conduct held that General Manning was quite right in saying that unless we cleared out before the rains we should have to stay till July or August.

We could hardly outrage common decency by leaving more undried blood than was already lying in our tracks.

So the Commissioner being "satisfied that the period would be opportune," a date was fixed for the flight from the interior, and 20th March for its announcement to the tribes.

The feeling amongst the Political Officers may be imagined, though those who had lived for the best part of a year at what ought to have been the front, were too worn out by hardships and fever to mind much what happened so long as the shame they had been enduring was put an end to.

In Corfield's letters there is a manifest inclination to steer clear of the subject, as a man might shun all reference to a deed that cast a slur on his family honour. It became intolerable to remain among men who were still trusting him, knowing what would be their feelings on discovering how deeply they had been deceived, for from November to March not a hint was allowed to be given that the promised British protection was going to be withdrawn from the country, so greatly was the natural resentment of the natives feared.

"The 6th King's African Rifles left here yesterday for Berbera to be disbanded," wrote Corfield from Burao on 15th March, "and all the time the Mullah's raiding parties are coming nearer, and we are running away in front of them, leaving our protected (save the mark!) tribes to their fate."

How literally this was the case is proved by General Manning's telegram.

On 28th February he reported that the Habr Toljaala

had been raided by Dervish horsemen near Waridad Ferry, and on 29th March a much more serious affair occurred.

The Commissioner's report of it read :—

"March 29th.—I have to-day received information ■ an attack by the Dervishes on party of Yahelli combination at Hadaga. Friendlies were surprised by a large force, and there were many killed on both sides."

But in some mysterious manner a much more copious account leaked out of the country, and the thought of 800 friendlies killed shocked even the House of Commons, so that the Secretary for the Colonies had to demand fuller information. It was then admitted that some 200 of our protected tribes were killed. Other sources of information put the casualties very much higher, and since 150 rifles were captured, and as the ammunition gave out, and the Mijjarten were surrounded and practically exterminated, the unofficial account seems to have something in its favour.

"This incident," as it is termed, which occurred nine days after the announcement of the Government's intention to evacuate the country, had no effect on His Majesty's Ministers. Since such slaughter left them indifferent, probably no massacre, whatever its magnitude, would, at that stage, have stayed their flight from the country.

"As soon as the evacuation of the interior is completed, it must be borne in mind that there will be a period of disorder," wrote the Commissioner in his last report.

His forecast was fulfilled. There was a period of disorder, though, perhaps, disorder is a somewhat mild description for an almost ceaseless succession of butcheries in which close on a hundred thousand unfortunate men, women, and children were killed in less than two years, and the country reduced to such an agony of destitution that women roasted and ate their own babes.

"How long this phase will last it is impossible to predict," wrote the Commissioner.

Captain Cordeaux could have informed him. It would

last until everyone who had trusted to British protection was exterminated, or until, as eventually happened, the British garrison in the country began to tremble for its own safety. The only uncertainty was which event might happen first.

On Corfield fell an undue share of the work which the evacuation entailed. Captain Dansey, the Senior Political Officer, who had shared with him the hardships of the past fourteen months, and was none the better for them, had left the country; but Corfield's peculiar power with the native had by this time been fully recognised, and it was the last thing with which the Commissioner was inclined to dispense.

The leave for which he had been strongly recommended eighteen months earlier had been hung up by the long period of inaction, and he felt now, as there were several Political Officers senior to himself in the country, whose energies had not been taxed for the past two years, that he might have been spared the last bitterness of humiliation before his own men.

But the Commissioner was firm. "He wrote me an exceedingly nice letter last week," related Corfield in January, "thanking me for my work under his administration, and saying he had brought it officially to the notice of the Secretary of State, and that he hoped it would receive suitable recognition."

Sir William Manning had always an excellent eye for ability and recognised at sight the sort of men he wanted. He knew Corfield for one of them and would not let him go.

An old schoolfellow of Corfield's who was on the Commissioner's staff writes of those days: "I do not think I shall be betraying any confidence, when I say that Manning considered him quite the most able of the Political Officers in Somaliland, and relied greatly on his knowledge of the native and his opinions on all matters affecting them. He had an extraordinary way with them, and seemed to understand their characters, a curious mixture, half-savage, half-

petulant child; better than anyone else. I think that he always got the best out of them, and so thought better of them than most of us. I have a note in my diary after an interview with the headmen at Berbera, just after the troops had withdrawn from the interior: 'Corfield excellent with the natives and wonderfully patient. Seems such a pity all his knowledge should be going to be simply wasted. . . .' I admired most I think his wonderfully cheery nature, which not even the Berbera climate could upset. He was very energetic and as strong as a bull. He had a curious cast in one eye which I think gave him a most attractive look."

In February, when Corfield still hoped he would escape the final scene, he wrote: "Everyone is praying that Manning will shut the show up quickly and get us all out of this humiliating mess," and when the Commissioner told him that he would have to stay to see it through, Corfield admitted that he "spoke pretty strongly," but he spoke fortunately to a man who could understand.

Thus it fell entirely on Corfield, as he put it, "to make the natives arrange some 'bundobust' for their own defence, and issue arms and ammunition," all the while having "to write reams" to the Commissioner, being the only man left in the Eastern District from whom a complete description of what had happened there, and what might be expected, could be obtained.

Of the last scene in Burao Corfield makes no mention, and would never afterwards refer to it.

Burao may not be the key, but it is the keyhole of the country; the door can only be shut on disorder by the force which has that in its possession, and any schemes for the administration of the country which omit Burao are bound to fail.

As long ago as 1902 the present writer urged that no further military expeditions should be attempted, but that a light railway should be built from Berbera through Sheikh

to Burao. Railways have a settling influence which cannot be attained by victories, even where victories can be ensured, as they cannot in Somaliland. They have a capacity for reducing the romantic exuberance of savage peoples to the stolid acceptance of the commonplace on which our civilisation is founded. They have an influence on creed and character greater even than that which they exert on commerce. Their plume of fire through the night is the flaming sword which prevents re-entry into our old Edens.

No other boundary of man's marking works any wonder of transformation, but where his iron rails have fallen nothing can ever be the same again.

With a railway to Burao and a small garrison there, an effective blow could have been struck at a moment's warning and with very little expense, and the troops speedily removed from the country. But such blows would not have been required; the railway would have dealt them. The Somali, faced by a force which robbed him of all the advantages which the desert conferred, would have capitulated to the bribes which it seemed to offer. It was the railway which subjugated the Sudan, is transforming Nigeria, and is enforcing the white man's habits from Cairo to the Cape. It would have constricted Mullahism as it strangled Mahdism, and would surely have cost no more than the fruitless expeditions from 1902 to 1904, the last of which consumed over two and a half millions. It would have given us besides at Sheikh a sanatorium in a lovely region and one of the finest climates in the world, and its running expenses would doubtless have been paid by the improved trade of the country.

But the extravagance of temporary economies is our weakness as a people, our tradesman's soul is always afraid of spending a penny more than may be required, and so in the end we spend the pounds.

Thus it came about that in 1910 the decree was issued for Burao to be abandoned, and a British force was occupied in the



*Photo by Doc R. E. Dinkels*

**RICHARD CORFIELD DISTRIBUTING ARMS TO THE "FRIENDLIES" IN  
BRAD FORT JUST BEFORE THE EVACUATION.**





humiliating task of razing its fortifications, burning its stores, destroying its munitions, and turning a place where flocks had for so long learnt to lie down in safety into a shambles where no man could call his life his own. "I must give an account of the withdrawal from Hargeisa in the West as told to me," writes Captain Dansey in the *Morning Post*. "Indian troops were sent up there. The day's work was carried on at the fort as usual. Then in the dead of night the officer representing His Majesty's Government left with his escort. Evacuation is too dignified a word to use to describe such a disgraceful retreat! It would be interesting to know the exact value of the buildings, tents, equipment and stores, telegraphs, etc., abandoned at various centres, such as Hargeisa, Sheikh, Burao, and Idoweina; the value of the ponies, camels, rifles, ammunition, and saddlery flung to the natives; the compensation paid; the amounts incurred in new subsidies. The Colonial Office could tell, but they will not. There was one item alone of £26,000 paid to a Fibre Company, besides the cost of the arbitration proceedings, which the Government assented to rather than face the action threatened by that Company. The Government naturally preferred unreported arbitration to the publicity of a suit in the Civil Courts. Then there has to be calculated the loss of trade at Berbera, the steadily diminishing shipping, the ruin of the caravan business, . . . the loss of life, loss of prestige and of national integrity. What wonder that Abyssinian elephant poachers in North-East Africa shoot at British officers! They are well aware of all that took place in Somaliland."

Bad as was the sneaking out of Hargeisa at dead of night, it was nothing in comparison with the bringing to the ground at Burao of all the emblems of empire. The renunciation not only of our sovereignty, but of every virile virtue for which our name and our rule has stood so long, was symbolised in that levelling of the bastions we had defended, and the rooms from which our justice had been



dispensed. With the knowledge all the while that the Dervish scouts were watching the destruction, only waiting for the end of it to pounce upon their prey.

When the last fort had been destroyed, and the ashes of the last pile of stores extinguished, and the column moved some miles on its way to the sea, the sound of rifle-firing was heard behind it, and Corfield went hurriedly back to discover what had happened. He found the firing had proceeded from the friendlies left at Burao, who were already quarrelling among themselves for a share of the divided spoil.

This was the people that not only was to learn on the moment how to govern itself, but how by combination to hold its own against the Mullah. It looked like it!

"After we left Burao," relates an officer who was with the force, "all the flood-gates of heaven seemed to be opened over us, and the rain whipped us all the way to the coast. Never had such rain been known there at that season, nor I believe at any other. It was as if the very skies were trying to hide our shame from heaven, and we dragged along through the pouring water that never ceased to lash us for a single instant, looking doubtless in the roaring gloom as contemptible as we felt, beaten like a dog till we were out of sight of the desert."

## **PART IV.—NIGERIA.**

### **CHAPTER XX.**

#### **THE LAND OF LANGUAGES.**

THERE was short respite allowed to Richard Corfield between his varied intervals of occupation. He never succeeded in using up all the leave he had earned in one service before he was provided with another. He only returned from Somaliland in May; he was on his way to Nigeria in September.

He could hardly have moved from one British possession to another which offered in our handling of them a more complete contrast.

We acquired Somaliland with a population of 800,000 pastoral people in 1885, we fled from it defeated and dishonoured in 1910. We acquired the rights to the greater part of Northern Nigeria with some 10,000,000 inhabitants, the bulk of them fighting men, in 1898; the Government took possession in 1900; and in four years had established an ascendancy over the entire country of 250,000 square miles, an area nearly three times that of England, Scotland, and Wales.

One must sorrowfully acknowledge that perhaps the most pregnant cause of such a startling contrast arose from the persuasion that there was money in one country and none in the other. Nigeria had been "run" by a Company, and very well run by it, before the Government showed any inclination to take it over; and as had been the case in India, the Company's commitments had to be accepted by the new authority.

By that time the territory the Company had acquired had proved its possession of many desirable assets, and looked promising as a source of future revenue and a present outlet for trade, promises which could never be credited to poor Somaliland in her most expansive moments.

But the reason which made easy the subjugation in so short a time of so vast a territory well filled with a fighting people, must be looked for in the character of the people, and on that point Corfield's comments are extremely interesting. He formed a poor opinion of the Hausa, and not too high a one of the Fulani, and ranked the Somali far above them both. Indeed, he showed a suggestive and unusual preference for the Pagan inhabitants of Northern Nigeria, though the virtues of the Muhammadans alone have appealed to previous observers. Of course Corfield was not in the country for long, and saw nothing of the peoples of the Northern provinces, Sokoto, Kano, and Bornu, hardened by contact with the desert Arabs, but he had a very swift discernment in sensing character, and there must be a good deal more in the Nigerian Pagan than has been told of him to have stirred a feeling of fellowship in Richard Corfield.

Corfield started for Nigeria with no idea where he might be stationed.

The administrative area was still very imperfectly covered, and what one might call its administrative efficiency was very unevenly distributed, while, owing to the exactions of climate and the rapid development of districts, the unevenness was continually varying, so that new comers were drafted in wherever the deficiency appeared to be most marked.

Corfield was therefore to proceed up the Niger River to Lokoja, where its great tributary the Benue joins it from the east, and await there further instructions.

It is thus from the river stern-wheeler *Valiant*, off Lokoja, that on 5th October his first letter home was sent.

"We arrived at Forcados"—which is a town on one of

the westernmost of the many mouths of the Niger—"last Friday, the 30th; transhipped into this river steamer and have taken a week reaching this place. The river trip is very pretty, the scenery in parts beautiful; all the delta of the river is mangrove swamps, which look very silent and mysterious; after these you get to the palm-oil country, palms and tropical foliage; and since yesterday we have been getting into a more hilly country and more open.

"Everyone is under cover now (1 p.m.), the hottest time of the day, and so no one has come down to the boat yet, and it is too hot to land, so I shall have to wait till four or five o'clock to hear if I disembark here and am posted to the Southern province, or go on to Zungeru for the Northern. . . . The river is high now as the rains are on, and is a mile to half a mile broad the whole way up. Here the Benué joins the Niger, and the united streams opposite this place are  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide."

He was posted to Bauchi, capital of a province of the same name, the quickest way to which at that time was by the watery highway of the Benué for some 330 miles as far as Ibi, and thence northward across country for another 200 miles on foot and horseback. Bauchi and Bukuru are curiously enough almost exactly the same distances from the Equator as Berbera and Burao.

A week later found him grinding his way against the strong current of the Benué still some 50 miles below Ibi.

"The tornadoes are on now and the river is very full, and when one comes along we have to run for the bank, as these river stern-wheelers are easily capsized by tornadoes. We have now come 600 miles up river from the sea, and the river is still more than half a mile broad."

The Benué, "the Mother of Waters," flows in a deeply wooded valley for 450 miles through Northern Nigeria before it joins the Niger, 340 miles from the sea. In the dry season it is only from two to three feet deep, wanders slowly through a sandy channel, and is only navigable by

the native dug-out canoes. With the rainy season it rapidly begins to rise, and in September runs from bank to bank, in many places a mile apart, and for some six weeks steamers can ascend it into German territory 500 miles from the confluence. Some of its tributaries at this season also supply useful waterways, the Gongola, which forms part of the boundary between Bauchi and Bornu and Yola, being navigable by steam launches for 150 miles.

It may be as well to explain that the Nigerian year is almost equally divided into two seasons. The rainy season begins in April with a few wild hurricanes of wind and rain, which grow more frequent and less violent, until in July the rain is almost continuous, and by the end of September the rivers are full and much of the country under water. In October the steady rain is again broken by violent tornadoes, which cease about the end of the month, and the dry season ensues, during which, for nearly six months, with the exception of a rare shower or two in December, not a drop of rain falls.

Corfield had thus arrived in the country at about the worst moment for the march up country which lay before him, when mile on mile of the Muri Province, through which his course lay, would be under water, and he thus describes his march, writing from Bauchi on 1st November:—

"I have at last arrived at Bauchi. . . . ■ took me 18 days trekking from Ibi. The first two days I did in canoes to S. Kodu, up a tributary of the Benue river. I then took to my feet, and had fifty miles through the most awful swamps. . . . You who say I am lazy would have been interested to see me staggering through the swamp—the mud and water often over my knees and always to the ankles. I averaged 10 to ■ miles a day and must have lost about 2 stone over the trip up to Yelua. There I got out of the swamps and tsetse-fly belt and got a horse—the country got better, I left the swamps behind

and gradually got on a higher level, until at Bauchi we are 2000 feet above sea-level: at Ibi, though 500 miles inland, I was only 300.

"On the road up, at each village the headman turns out with anything up to 20 horsemen and the village band and meets you about 11 miles outside his village. He salutes you, and the village band then take up position immediately in front of your horse, and play you in, making the most fiendish noise on drums, horns, and bagpipes. It is regular comic opera and I wanted to roar with laughter. Arrived at the village, you are conducted to the European rest camp, and fowls, eggs, vegetables, and corn for your horse are brought, for which you present the chief with 1s. or 1s. 6d., for which he is deeply grateful.

"The Resident of this province is away on tour, so I don't know whether I shall stay here or go to other stations in the province—these are Narraguta, Bukuru and Pankshin all in the tin area, and Gombe east of here. . . . It takes weeks for letters to get about this country, the mails are awfully bad. It is six weeks from here to England."

Bauchi had been the most active centre of the slave trade, and in 1901 its Muhammadan Emir had been guilty of the crime of sacking treacherously one of his own towns, and in defiance of the Koran's prohibition, selling into slavery those of its inhabitants who had survived the sword. In February 1902 Colonel Morland led an expedition against him from Ibi, and after subduing an insubordinate Pagan tribe on the road, deposed the Emir and installed a British Resident, the expedition passing on to the pacification of Bornu, then in a condition of wild disquiet. Such were the simple methods by which Northern Nigeria was won, and save for a few minor expeditions against troublesome Pagan tribes, in Bauchi there had been no further fighting, though the province had to be held by a mere show of force, two or three white men with a few native soldiers controlling amicably a population, most of it savage, of over a million.

Corfield found the administrative work of the province running, in 1910, almost too smoothly for his taste.

"I am settling down into my new work," he wrote on 8th November. "The judicial side ■ run almost exactly as it was in Somaliland, that is to say, all cases are referred back to the Mohammedan Court for trial, and the proceedings brought to you for approval. The only cases we take direct ourselves are slavery and manslaughter and murder.

"The administrative side is different. Here we spend nearly all our time assessing taxes and receiving them, and sending in reports about various natural products such as rubber, fibre, palm oil, cotton, etc. Bauchi is the headquarters of the province, and consequently there is a good deal of office work.

"My day at present is at follows:—

Get up . . . . .	6 a.m.
Office . . . . .	7-9 a.m.
Breakfast . . . . .	9 a.m.
Office . . . . .	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Lunch . . . . .	2 p.m.

"We do nothing after 2 p.m., and generally play tennis after 4.30 or go for a ride or shoot. There are plenty of birds about here. 7-9 a.m. I interview the Alkali, the Mohammedan judge of Bauchi, and hear any complaints. 10-2 p.m. I help another Political man with the tax work.

"Last week Groom (the other Political here) and I went down to the town to make payments from the native treasury to officials of the native administration.

"We were met about half a mile from the town walls by the Emir, and about 100 horsemen, scarlet-coated footmen with Dane guns, trumpeters and a large band, who escorted us to and through the town to the Palace—the townsmen on the way all kneeling and shouting zaki, which means 'lion,' and is their salutation to a white man, and the women all looloo-ing, which ■ a shrill cry something between a scream and a whistle, which ■ their welcome; all very



Photo. by Capt. T. H. Pringle.

#### BATHING POOL AT PANYAM.





interesting after Somaliland, where the natives were so undemonstrative. The wall of Bauchi is ■ feet high and 7 miles in circumference with 4 great gates. We live about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles outside the town walls. . . . Isn't the time one's letters take getting home appalling? after 12 days in Somaliland, 6 to 7 weeks here seems a lifetime. I haven't had any yet though I've been in the country 5 weeks."

Corfield at once, as was his habit, set himself to learn Hausa, intending to pass his examination in the course of the year before going home on leave, which would enable him to get accelerated promotion on the strength of his Somaliland service.

In Northern Nigeria it may be explained there are four peoples, the Pagan, Bornu, Hausa, and Fulani. The Pagans are a primitive people, mostly agriculturists, with a diversity of languages—sixty to seventy being spoken in one small area—a variety of customs and superstitions and little in common except independence. They appear to have been the aboriginal inhabitants, and to have been driven into the mountains and other inaccessible or unwholesome places by the Hausa invasion.

The Hausas are reputed to have come from Arabia a thousand years ago to Kano; but there seems a likelihood that they are a mixture of Abyssinian, Copt, and Arab, and may have come from Meroë, south of the Nubian desert, intermarrying with the women of the aborigines and driving the men farther south; but in reality little can be affirmed as to their origin, save that it must be sought elsewhere. They are comparatively recent arrivals, and found the Bornu and Pagans on the spot. They were nominally Muslims, but really idolaters under Muslim rulers, with rites and beliefs which have affinity with those of the Phœnicians. They are black, but with cleaner cut features than the typical negro, their northern blood being probably mixed with that of the people they displaced. Their language has points of resemblance with Berber and Coptic, and is one

of the three most widely spoken tongues in Africa, Arabic and Swahili being the others. It has a literature; the Hausa being, outside Egypt and Abyssinia, the only race in Africa which has reduced its speech to writing, and some of the sentiments it has enshrined have quite an air of moral dignity.

"This life is a sowing place for the next; all who sow good deeds will behold the great city."

"Whoever chooses this world rejects the choice of the next: he seizes one cowrie but loses two thousand cowries."

"Mother and daughter, you choose between them; you know that you cannot marry them both.

"So too, earth and the next world; you know that you cannot bring them together, so as to retain them."

"If there is no purity there is no prayer; if there is no prayer there is no drinking of the water of heaven."

It is rather interesting to find in Hausaland the ant taken as a symbol of sloth, and the cat of insincerity.

"Sleep not the sleep of the ignorant and careless; he stretches his limbs, he rolls like an ant."

"Repent to God, leave off repenting like a wild cat; it repents with the fowl in its mouth, it puts it not down."

"The son of the ignorant is a corpse even before he is dead: his cunning whilst he is on earth is vain."

"We have a journey before us which cannot be put aside, whether you are prepared or unprepared, whether by night or just before the dawn, or in the morning when the sun has risen."

One gives these specimens because they offer a peculiar, ■ deceptive, commentary on the people that produced them, for the Hausas, who are of a trading and commercial stock, have always, like ourselves, lived a good deal below the level of their moral apophthegms.

In the early years of last century they endured a religious invasion by the Fulanis under the banner of Othman dan Fodio, who preached a *jihad* to achieve a revival of the

Muhammadian faith throughout Hausaland. How actually he achieved it is not very clear, but the practical outcome was that Fulani rulers replaced Hausa ones in every state but one. The origin of the Fulanis is likewise obscure, but their fairer skin, finer features, and long straight hair seem to have come from Aryan ancestors, and being primarily herdsmen, they have been identified with the Hyskos or Shepherd Kings that invaded Egypt from Arabia.

Found in the west of Africa, they have also been associated with the lost Atlantis, and have shown a curious aptitude over a wide area for occupying other men's thrones. There were Fulanis scattered through the Hausa States before Sheikh Othman's *jihad*, chiefly priests and teachers, and the Hausas themselves must have been largely responsible for the success of the revival and the supplanting of their own rulers by Fulani Mallams.

The result was a sort of federation of the Hausa States, with the Sultan of Sokoto as their spiritual head, and this was the condition of the country when the British Protectorate was proclaimed.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE PAGAN COUNTRY.

WORK at Bauchi ran itself too much for Corfield's taste; his energies asked more than to be a mere oiler of machinery.

"It is not half as jolly as Somaliland," he wrote in the beginning of December. "One is not half as free out here, not a tenth of the responsibility, not much work, and what there ■ not nearly so interesting. The natives here are like the South African natives, they are only Mahomedan in name and are all really pagans at heart.

"The work consists of keeping an eye on the Native Administration, each province being under an Emir and his chiefs. This control appears to me to be a good deal of a farce, and the white officials are really very much in the dark as to what really goes on and the real feelings of the people. In any case, all the interesting political work is done by the Resident in charge of the province. My work at present has been chiefly supervising road-making and rest camps, reporting on the natural products and their possible commercial value, supervising the work of the native alkalies (magistrates), and running the Provincial Treasury. Too much red tape and clerical work to suit me."

He adds something to this in a letter written about the same time to Mr. H. Richardson, his old master at Marlborough and much valued friend:

"The province is practically the Emirate over which the Bauchi Emir rules; supported by us. The ruling chiefs are

rather casual Mahomedans, the lower classes either nominally Mahomedan or frankly pagan.

"There appears to be none of the fanaticism or religious zeal here one found in Somaliland, and my private opinion of the Hausa and Fulani is that as men they compare very unfavourably with the Yemen Arab or the Somali. The latter, I think, are higher caste, more intelligent, plucky, and independent.

"The Emir here on ceremonious occasions (which he loves) turns out with a goodly show, about 1000 horsemen, trumpeters, drums on camels, etc., but there wouldn't be much left of it, I fancy, if 50 Dervish raiders of the old Mullah suddenly weighed into them.

"The work of a political officer also appears to me to be lighter and with much less responsibility here, the people being very peaceful by nature and naturally law-abiding. . . .

"The climate is none too good, but I don't think much worse than Somaliland.

"The tin-field here I think should do well. The country is undoubtedly very rich, and things seem to be going ahead. They have a Miners' Association and a Miners' Clubhouse at Naraguta, 70 miles from here, and a road fit for motor traffic has just been completed between Railhead and Naraguta, which should make transport cheaper, all tin at present being taken down to railhead by carriers. By railhead I mean the nearest point of the Lagos-Kano railway."

In 1908 a railway line was begun from Baro on the Niger, 60 miles above Lokoja, to Kano, which was to pass through Zaria, the centre of the cotton district, 600 miles from the coast and 300 from the nearest port on the navigable Niger, and at Kano tap the trade of Central Africa. At the same time the Lagos railway was to be carried forward till it joined the other, about 40 miles west of Zungeru.

The Kano railway would pass within 100 miles of Naraguta, the headquarters of tin-mining, and a branch

line would not be difficult of construction, whereas the tin had till then to be taken by carrier in 65-lb. loads 200 miles to Loko on the Benué, and then by river 110 miles to Lokoja and 340 miles to the sea, a slow and costly journey.

The Kano line was completed by 1912, and its influence on the markets of the Sudan has been already felt, and goods that formerly found their way to Europe across the Desert, now go down to the West Coast and are sent by sea.

As December went on Corfield found the work at Bauchi becoming monotonous. The Governor, Sir Hesketh Bell, was expected in January, and Corfield had to superintend the preparation of camps for him between Bauchi and Naraguta, and he was glad of the change from the routine work of "this quiet and peaceful country," as he calls it; "very different from Somaliland, where the natives always had their tails up and wanted watching carefully."

In January he obtained his wish to get away from Bauchi, for the headquarters of the district was moved to Naraguta, and he was sent to take charge of the Bukuru division, a part of the province inhabited by Pagana.

"We are having very hot weather at present," he wrote, "continually over 100 degrees in the shade during the middle of the day. . . . Everything is quietish here, but we are getting ready for a military patrol of 2 or 3 companies to attack and punish some towns (Ganiwari) in this province near Bukuru, who have been truculent and refusing to pay taxes. I was warned last week that I was to be the political officer accompanying the force, then I heard that they were starting at once and couldn't wait for me to join them . . . but they are still delayed, so perhaps I may go yet."

Meanwhile he spent his time collecting the taxes. Quite a few years earlier there had been but two forms of currency, cowries and slaves; you took them both on your journeys, and one carried the other, but the weakness of the method

was, that you had to take more than you needed of the larger coin to carry your requirements of the smaller. Now Corfield speaks of collecting £400 in a morning all in shilling, sixpenny and threepenny pieces; a florin being the largest coin in the country.

"I am leaving to-day for Bukuru," he wrote on 25th January, "the new district I have been posted to. I am sorry I am leaving Bauchi in some ways, as they are a very progressive civilised people here, Mohammedans, and well licked into shape. Whereas the Bukuru division is composed of Pagans, who are very shy and sometimes truculent, in fact I expect it will be more like dealing with Somalis. But at any rate it will be my own show, as I shall be in charge, and so far here I have only been second man. The climate here at present is, for these countries, very good, better than Somaliland at its best, but of course it is a very different matter in the rains. . . . I have just sent all my kit off with Dualeh, and am going to ride out to the camp they will make this afternoon, probably about 15 miles out. Human transport is very poor after the old camel. . . . The Pagan belts here are the hills to which the Mohammedan invaders drove the original pagan aboriginals. Bauchi Emirate, for instance, is a flat country, largely cultivated, and with good grazing. Where I am going now, Bukuru, it is a mountainous, poor country with little cultivation and grazing land. The Pagans are, of course, much less intelligent than the Mohammedan Hausa and Fulani. Bukuru is supposed to be the healthiest station in N. Nigeria, up in the mountains, 4700 feet above sea-level. It is a large plateau, 2500 feet above the surrounding country."

Dualeh, to whom he refers in this letter, was the faithful Somali who, from the moment of entering his service, was never parted from his master, and who, when Corfield had fallen at Dul Madoba, fought on beside his body, until he fell, riddled with wounds, upon it.



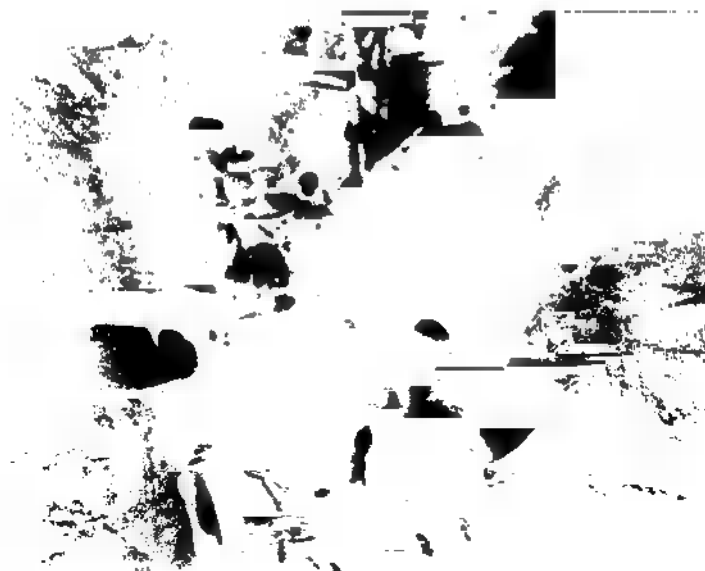
Corfield reached Naraguta on 1st February, having been delayed on the road by an attack of fever, and having to be brought in to his destination in a hammock. He had a busy time taking over the Bukuru division at Naraguta, where he describes:

"Everything is chaos here at present, the provincial headquarters being in process of moving here from Bauchi, houses are springing up, gaols, offices, mining inspectors, etc. . . . I leave to-morrow . . . and drop my stores, etc., at Bukuru, and go straight on to a place called Ganawari with a section of soldiers to punish a tribe there who have given trouble and refused to pay tax."

The patrol, consisting of 23 rank and file West African Field Force under Lieutenant, now Captain T. W. Pragnell, 4th Hussars, was to have awaited Corfield's arrival at Bukuru, but owing to his illness it was directed to Naraguta, whence the little force started on 6th February, reaching Ganawari at 2.30 p.m. on 7th. It camped on a bluff overlooking the Ganawari compounds and Kaduna River. Corfield sent messengers to the king, telling him to come in and bring food, and receiving the reply that if he wanted food he had better come and fetch it, the force moved forward to the compound and collected sufficient food for the night, some spears being thrown at the carriers, but a few rounds fired in the air ended the opposition.

Next day, as Corfield's further messengers had been driven away with spears, he decided that force would have to be used, and, starting at 2 a.m. with Lieutenant Pragnell and 15 men, an attempt was made to head off some ponies which were reported as about to leave the town. Owing, however, to the multiplicity of roads the ponies got clear away, and the party, on returning to camp, was attacked by Pagans, who were driven off with a loss of 3 killed.

At 3 p.m., as the king had paid no heed to a third message demanding food and taxes, a demonstration by the entire force was made against the king's compound. The



*Photo by AP. T. H. P.*

**BREAKING UP THE TOWN OF GANAWARI**



party was at once attacked and had to fight its way up the rocky hill for about 600 feet, encountering considerable opposition from the spearmen, and from rocks hurled down the hill, a soldier and a carrier receiving spear wounds and Corfield and Pragnell being hit with rocks. Corfield getting a nasty wound in the right arm.

Some ■ Ganawari were killed in the assault and the force returned to camp after burning the compounds.

Next morning the king brought in a goat as tax, declined by Corfield as inadequate, and declared that his young men refused to bring in any tax. He was given till noon, and at 1.45 p.m., as he had returned without being able to achieve anything, a fresh attack was made on the hill, and after it was carried Pragnell left Corfield and a few men to cover the advance from a point overlooking the king's angwa—which is a collection of compounds—while he with Mr. S. E. M. Stobart, Assistant Inspector of Mines, who had accompanied the expedition, and the remainder of the men attacked the king's compound. The hill was thus cleared to the top, 1000 to 1100 feet, 3 ponies and 15 goats being captured.

Fighting was continued on the 10th, the number of caves on the hillside in which the Ganawari were hidden making the work difficult. Corfield, referring later to this feature of the fighting, wrote:

"It's ticklish work in the caves, as although one has a gun versus a spear or arrow, one is against the light going in, so they can see you and you can see nothing."

The next two days were occupied with a repetition of these operations, but at an earlier hour, so as to catch the Ganawari as they came out of the caves to search for food, the only incident of note being the precipitate retreat of Corfield and the men with him before an attack of bees.

On the 13th an old man came in from the angwas asking for peace, which was granted with an offer to treat any of the wounded, of whom 4 were brought in.

From Ganawari, the little force advanced by two roads upon Hoss, another recalcitrant Pagan town; but the fame of its success had preceded it, and with the exception of the large compounds, the inhabitants of which had fled, the people of Hoss capitulated. The unfriendly compounds were destroyed, and two days later, as their late occupants were reported to be encamped a few miles off, Pragnell, sending his men in a circuit to cut off their retreat, went himself mounted with Corfield, Stobart, and a couple of others, and attacked them in front; the scheme being completely successful, twenty head of stock being captured and several prisoners.

On 18th the force returned to Bukuru, having inflicted a loss of 28 men and captured many times the amount of tax demanded. As an expedition of 300 men had been sanctioned for March against these two towns, to have subdued them with 28 in ten days was very much to the credit of their commander, who mentioned in his report "the whole-hearted co-operation and support afforded me by Mr. R. C. Corfield, Asa. Rea, and Mr. S. E. M. Stobart, without which the success of the patrol would have been impossible."

"I am now settled down more or less here in charge of this district," wrote Corfield from Bukuru on his return there. "I am alone again as there are no soldiers here. I have only 15 police. This station has been unoccupied for nearly a year, the resident having been living in Naraguta, as he was also acting as Inspector of Mines; now, however, the mines department has come into being and I shall not have that to do. In consequence of being so long disused, this station is in an awful state of decay, and I shall be busy for a month rebuilding the mud houses and rethatching. My own house is a three-roomed mud house with thatched roof on a bluff overlooking an enormous stretch of open country on all sides. . . . To the east, two miles away, is the large pagan town of Bukuru of 12,000 inhabitants, and to the north-west the pagan town of N'jell of 6000 in-

habitants. The district is very thickly populated, towns and villages everywhere, each a little world to itself—they are all pagan here, no Mahommedans, and neither men nor women wear one stitch of clothing, except that every morning the ladies pick a few fresh leaves and wear them where I suppose Eve did. They are great horsemen and ride their little hill ponies bareback—they are always hunting."

Almost all the houses in Northern Nigeria are of mud, even the king's palaces; for the white ant makes the use of timber impossible; and a kind of reed is used for thatching which is apparently not to the ant's taste. They are also all of one storey, save in Kano, where Arab influence has effected the occasional addition of a second.

"There are 150,000 pagans in this district and something like 300 white miners," Corfield wrote a little later, "and for this I have 20 police and the call on a half company of W.A.F.F. ■ miles away, so you can see that things have to be done pretty well by the white man's prestige and a good deal of judicious bluff. This year's taxes are nearly all in, but the last £100 or so takes as much extracting as all the rest, as it means it comes from towns that won't pay except under compulsion."

Corfield spent the latter part of March collecting tribute from the outlying pagan districts. "The rains have begun," he wrote from Balsak, "and trekking is not pleasant . . . I am now in the Rukoba country . . . a very wild, mountainous country, a high plateau with no trees or undergrowth to speak of. This country is very expensive in some ways compared to Somaliland; for instance, one always receives and gives presents to chiefs, headmen, etc., in going from town to town, or tribe to tribe. In Somaliland we had a Government grant for these presents, here we have to do it out of our own pockets."

He was back in Bukuru by the middle of April, and wrote:

"I am off again on trek to-morrow. The rains have begun in earnest now and trekking is most unpleasant, rivers to be crossed on calabash rafts, not by any means a safe method, daily drenching, and almost nightly blowing down of one's tent. The rainy season here is no joke. . . . I am off now to get in the remaining tribute and am coming home round by the Ganawari, the people we punished in February, just to see how they're feeling, and ■ likely to be more amenable in future."

The patrol which furnished the escort for this trip was composed of 30 men of the West African Field Force under Lieutenant Pragnell. It picked Corfield up at Hoss on 25th April, and marched next day to Ganawari, where they found the Pagans quite friendly and ready to sell supplies, and some of them even working on a tin property near the town.

Corfield spent two days hearing and judging cases, and the patrol moved on the 30th to Monguna to exact a fine for cattle raiding. Payment of the fine being refused, the next four days were spent in driving the inhabitants out of the unfriendly angwas and destroying them. Some opposition was offered, and the rocky and cave-pitted hill-side made effective dealing with the enemy extremely difficult, the Pagans concealing themselves in the broken ground or taking refuge in the caves.

On 5th May the inhabitants, seeing that there was no other way of saving their town from destruction, came in at noon with the fines, and Corfield spent the afternoon, as though nothing had been happening, hearing native cases, an occupation which was continued through the whole of the next day; many natives coming in to *tuba*, or repent, for their opposition.

As Monguna was the boundary of Corfield's district he parted there from the patrol, which had other villages to visit, and returned to Bukuru.

"We had some mild scrapping," was his comment on the



*Photo by Capt. T. W. Pennington*

THE ZARIBA AT HOSS.





tour, "having two soldiers killed, and it would have been an enjoyable trip if it wasn't that the rains have broken, and trekking is not at all nice. The Government here only allow you an 80 lb. tent, which generally blows down at the first whisper of the tornado; the ground also gets swampy and every river fills. Last Monday, the day I got back, I had to swim two rivers, and getting my kit over took hours. One has to construct a raft of calabashes or logs, and float each load over separately. I thought I should be able to sit down here for a little, but I've just had orders telling me to go out to the Bisichi Mine east of here, and assess compensation to be paid to natives for damage done by the mining operations, and for the land they propose to build and work on."

In such cases the company applying for the license to mine has to satisfy the political officer of the district that adequate payment has been made to the natives for the damage done by sluicing and other operations in the search for tin, the manager paying the sum fixed to the political officer, who distributes it among the Pagan farm-holders.

He returned to Bukuru only to find an instruction to settle a boundary dispute between two Pagan towns which had been fighting over their respective farm lands. Of the operation Corfield gave an amusing account on 26th May:

"As I write it is blowing a hurricane, and pouring with rain, and I'm sitting in a sweater and a coat, as houses here with doors and windows are unknown, and although one blocks 'em up with various contrivances, the wind whistles through.

"I got back yesterday after having been out settling a boundary dispute between pagans—four towns were concerned all speaking different dialects, and it was absolutely impossible to find out the truth of the matter. Finally, I simply strode ahead for 3 or 4 miles, putting in beacons every 200 yards, the Pagans, to the tune of a thousand and

so, mounted and dismounted, fully armed, following, all yelling and hurling curses at each other and everybody. One tribe would put up a few beacons, thinking the line was favouring them, and then would have nothing to do with it, and then another would think they'd put in a few; finally, after a solid nine hours of it, half the time in the rain, I got the job finished and got to camp, when I told the lot the first town that broke the line would be burnt, as the palaver was now over and the line permanent. As none of the whole crowd were satisfied, I consider it must have been a very just decision on my part."

The picture of Corfield going on indifferently, with his long slow stride, sticking in beacons, and paying no heed whatever to the thousands of yelling natives, is one of the most characteristic that his letters contain. In his next letter he gives in a few words a wonderfully clear impression of June in Nigeria. He is back in Bukuru again.

"I have got quite a good garden going now, things grow very well in the rains, and I have got peas, beans—broad and French—tomatoes, vegetable marrow, onions, radishes, cabbage, lettuce, beetroot, turnips, carrots, and cucumber, all doing well; a fairly good selection, isn't it? Also beds of pansies, mignonette, antirrhinum, and nasturtiums. . . . I am writing now at half-past 11 in the morning (don't do it at home, do I?), but the mornings are simply splendid at present on the plateau here. Heavy rain nearly every night clears away before dawn, and leaves a wonderfully clear atmosphere, and the hills all round, though miles away, look as if you could walk over to them in half an hour. The grass is brilliantly green and sparkling with raindrops, and not yet too long, and not a cloud in the sky." The grass grows during the rains 10 feet in height, and when saturated with water is not a source of joy to the traveller. "About 1 p.m., however, all this changes, the sky becomes overcast, and about 4 p.m. up comes a tornado which makes you think the roof is

going, slowing down after dark to good steady rain, and so on till September.

"Last week a tornado carried off practically all the roofs at Naraguta, iron and thatched, some of the sheets of iron being found  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a mile away; this in the middle of the night too!"

He gives in the same letter some idea of the drain on the purse of a political officer in Nigeria, which may be of service.

"Here the living expenses are three times those of Somaliland. There, horses and camels and food for them, and personal servants were all allowed by Government, also grooms, gardeners, and outdoor servants of that description. Here absolutely nothing is given by Government; horses have to be bought and kept up, and several at that, as there is an enormous amount of trekking to be done. Also, in Somaliland, Government gave us a grant out of which to make return presents to native chiefs who bring in presents, sometimes expensive ones, to us; here we have to make an adequate return present out of our own pockets. It is, according to custom, impossible to refuse a present without insulting the donor, and equally customary to give an adequate present in return."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE PLAGUE OF WATERS.

Writing on 9th June, Corfield gives a picture of the isolation of the interior during the rains: the mails all held up by swollen rivers and the conversion of thousands of square miles of country into impenetrable marsh; the telegraph always down in spite of heroic efforts to keep it working, and week succeeding week without a whisper reaching the exiles of all that was happening in a drier world. But his letter touches on an even more interesting subject, the question of slavery, a thorny problem in Nigeria, and one about which the minds of men, equally desiring its abolition, have been divided.

"I have just finished trying a slavery case this morning, in which I was able to convict the man who caught and sold and the man who bought the boy. Both accused were pagans, so that, although if they had been Mahomedans I should have given them seven years apiece, being pagans I only gave them a year, because they are such wild men that if they are kept in gaol a year, or, sometimes even six months, they invariably pine away and die. The mortality amongst pagan prisoners is so high that now only the lightest sentences are given them: a month to them corresponding to a year almost to more civilised natives. Amongst these pagans in my district, practically all the judicial work is trying cases of slave dealing, murder, robbery, or witchcraft. Administrative work consists in settling town or tribal boundaries, road making, inducing the pagan to labour and trade, and opening markets. Tax collecting, of course,

is 'always with us,' and the many matters which arise over the mining business; inquests and disposal of estates of white men."

On the slavery question a good deal has been spoken and written which could hardly be described as "according to knowledge."

As a "civilised" people our horror of slave-holding finds ready expression, yet we would hardly deny that a pagan could point to miseries and privations, just as appalling and far wider spread, caused in our own country by the drink which we have so carefully and wisely denied to him. There is indeed scarcely an epithet that we apply to the bondage of the flesh, which he could not attach with greater force to the bondage of the spirit; and without holding any brief for the teetotaler, it is impossible to deny that though happy slaves of the lash may be numbered by the million, few would dare to instance a single fortunate slave of the bottle.

It may be argued, of course, that slavery to strong drink suits a northern people, but it is not quite impossible to aver that slavery to strong men may suit a southern.

Also, quite apart from such a vexed comparison, it must be remembered that for all our protests we are just as wedded to a system of slavery as is any Fulani Emir. Only with us the State instead of its ruler makes and keeps the slaves.

It is true that many of our State slaves, or prisoners as we call them, may recover their liberty, but that also is the case in Hausa land, where slaves have acquired not only liberty but wealth; while, on the other hand, the condition of our State slaves is far more intolerable than that of the average-priced Pagan, even when the difference in their mental material is left out of the reckoning.

The Christian is kept in forlorn confinement, and put to loathed and unprofitable forms of labour; the Pagan works in the fields, unfettered, in the joyous light of day, and on

precisely the same tasks that would have employed him as a free man.

It would, of course, be pointed out to the Pagan who used such arguments that the Christian slave is a wicked man, who is being taught a better way of life by the somewhat inconclusive means of prison discipline.

But this is just the point on which the Pagan would most gladly join issue.

"You," he might say, "make slaves of your bad men and women, and lose money over them; but we make money by making slaves of ours."

That is indeed what he did, and what it now troubles him to be prevented doing. He has no prisons; the thought of prison, as Corfield mentions, would be altogether an abomination to his untrammelled nature.

If you put him in prison he dies, and his love of liberty would shrink from doing such a wrong to his brother. How then is he to dispose of his bad men and women?

Witchcraft is to the West African a terribly real business; a native missionary has been known to denounce from the pulpit his bewitchment by members of his flock, so deeply rooted is the sense of it. The Pagan communities used to reduce their sufferings from it by selling the witches into slavery. They have also a keen sense of the financial responsibility of the family, and sometimes their only way for restoring the credit of a house was by selling the debtor.

When the edict was promulgated against slavery, they found themselves encumbered with witches and evil doers, and with no way of recovering bad debts, not being acquainted with the Christian method of locking up the debtor. What was the natural consequence? The bad men and the witches were taken out into the bush and slain. Thus does our confident British way sometimes ensure the liberty of the subject with an unsuspected certainty; though probably, had they been given the option, the dead men

and women would have chosen the restrictions of slavery rather than the freedom of the grave; though they might have preferred either to a debtor's prison.

Thus though the Pagan was the greatest sufferer from the slave raids of the Muhammadan Emirs, he by no means appreciated the prohibition of slavery. The White Man had taken from him all the joy of life,—the excitement of tribal war, the raiding of cattle, the looting of caravans; and, if he wanted no slaves, he demanded tribute which could not be paid as before in malefactors. He did not, does not yet, quite realise that the White Man stands for a security of existence of which he may yet learn to feel the charm. At present he considers himself the victim of a form of compulsory insurance, for the benefits of which he has no desire.

But it is not alone the Pagan who has been affected by our attitude to slavery. Of the Hausa-speaking people, when we took over the country, it was estimated that one-third were slaves. Nor can the problem of the slave owner be overlooked. The slave as a form of property has received public sanction for about the same period, and with the same unanimity in Nigeria, as has the investment of capital in companies amongst ourselves. Now consider the effect on England of an edict making the holding of stocks and shares a punishable offence!

Yet our proclamation abolishing slavery probably wrought, in proportion to the countries, a far greater financial dislocation, and it has been immensely to the credit of the peoples, who had suddenly to put up with our rule and uncongenial ideas, that they have accepted the necessity of ideals which seem to them pernicious folly, and assisted with unexpected docility the new régime.

But the Pagans, being a much freer-minded people than the Hausas or Fulani, are still far from being converted to our ideas of freedom, arguing with a certain savage cogency



that liberty to be really acceptable should include all ways of doing what you like.

It must, however, be clearly borne in mind that though slave owning in Nigeria was a more or less natural business, slave raiding was an awful and continuous tragedy, the ultimate destruction of every people compelled to endure it, which called for suppression the instant we were strong enough to enforce our will, and, since our somewhat high-handed methods in relation to both aspects of the question have turned out so well, we may be glad to have escaped the many pitfalls that lay in wait for a more consistent logic in policy.

Despite the season, Corfield was again forced to take the road, or what passes for it in Nigeria; he wrote from Bukuru at the end of June on his return:—

"The rains are tremendous at present; all day and every day, and quite cold. I have a fire blazing away, as I write, quite cheerily in an old oil drum in my mud house, and much appreciate it. I got back yesterday after 14 days of about the most uncomfortable trekking I've ever had. Swollen rivers, which one has to swim two or three times during each march, sopping under foot and pouring above; kit, bedding, everything drenched, and no sun to dry 'em. I'm glad to be back, and am going to hug my little house for a bit."

He had, as a matter of fact, to hug it closer than he intended, for the ceaseless soaking of the past fortnight proved too much for even his constitution, and he was laid up with an internal chill, and had to amuse himself watching the pansies, sweet peas, and nasturiums struggling with the tornadoes about his mud house, and managing to bloom in spite of "heavy rain without a break from 12 noon to 6 and 7 o'clock, and sometimes at night and in the morning . . . communication being practically cut off with everybody else owing to the swollen rivers and water-logged condition of the country."

He wrote, while laid up, a very interesting letter to Mr. Richardson, giving some account of his expedition :

"I was trying to rope in some pagan slave-dealers. I got two, but the arch-culprit has so far evaded me. I razed and burnt his compounds, however. I was also inspecting newly-pegged prospecting areas; these have to be inspected by Government, and compared with the plan sent in by the owners, and other formalities before a lease is granted. . . . About the railway—they are laying the branch from the Baro-Kano railway (leaving it at Zaria) to the tin-fields very quickly, and hope to have it up here at the beginning of the New Year. Meanwhile, pegging out of new claims goes on apace, but, I'm afraid, many contain little tin, or of a low grade, and will never pay, if floated with anything approaching a large capital. . . . There are some 150 White miners up here, some very queer sort—a great change from administration in Somaliland, where until the troops came, one might not see another White man for six months. . . . Yes, it is true they have granted a medal and clasp for the operations in Somaliland 1909-10, and I am included, as I was attached as Intelligence Officer, but it is no honour, and they have no business to issue a medal. Medals are for victories and fine deeds, not for running away from a black man and his crew."

By the middle of July, Corfield reported himself as fit again, and looking forward, in spite of the incessant rain, to starting on 21st to visit eight towns in the southern part of his district, the taxes of which were four months in arrears; "though what kind of job," he wonders, "we can make of military operations this weather, goodness knows." "The rains," he adds, "are having a bad effect on the miners, and a tremendous number have been invalided, and a good few died. We buried one poor fellow yesterday from blackwater fever, the manager of quite a big concern out here. The Government mining department has also been upset by the Chief Mining Inspector having been

invalided, so at present I am doing the inspection of mining areas and prospecting leases in this district, until the mining department is at full strength again. So far since April we have had 48 inches of rain."

He had expected, before he left, to hand over the northern part of his district to another, and so be set free to devote all his energies to the wild and unknown tribes in the south of it; but instead, owing to the decimating effect of the climate, the man with whom he hoped to share the work was transferred to another province, and he was put in charge of the entire division.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE KALERI PATROL.

THE expedition to the Kaleri district was perhaps the most important military enterprise with which Corfield was associated in Nigeria, since practically nothing was known of the district or of the tribes inhabiting it.

Lieutenant T. W. Pragnell had again command of the patrol, which consisted of 25 men of the 2nd N. Nigeria Regiment, and it was accompanied by Mr. Bumbold and Mr. Kent, mining engineers, as the Kaleri country had not yet been prospected. Pragnell was too unwell to start with the patrol, but he picked it up on 26th July when it was camped in front of Daffo, against which an attack had to be made to secure taxes and food.

The force marched next day to Bargesh and spent the 28th, a day of exceptionally heavy rain, collecting taxes there; moving on 29th to M'Bun, which put up a stubborn resistance, nine Pagans being killed. There was heavy rain all the morning and all the following afternoon, when the inhabitants came in to *tuba*, and pay their tribute, bringing also their wounded for treatment.

Tof was reached next day in rain, and Kamwai on 1st August, lying in a basin 700 feet below Tof. The road ran parallel to a mountain stream which was an absolute succession of small waterfalls, the stream joining another at the foot of the hill, and, passing Kange, making a vast leap of 1000 feet on to the plains below. Kamwai was apparently deserted, but the patrol on entering the town found all the doors of the compounds barricaded, and two

or three human skulls hung over each door. After getting well into the town the patrol was attacked; but the Pagans were driven off, the headmen's houses destroyed, and sufficient food taken for the needs of the force.

Kange was reached on the 2nd August, and as Corfield's messengers had been shot at before reaching the town, the place had to be attacked, a good deal of fighting taking place before the inhabitants could be expelled. Rain fell that evening, all night, and all the following day, when Corfield's messengers on their way to M'Bal and Birkun were attacked by the Kamwai men. In consequence, a fresh attack had to be made on Kamwai, and the town destroyed.

The 4th August furnished the most exciting experience of the expedition. The people of Katankwai had refused to come in, driving away Corfield's messengers, and informing them "that they had been looking forward for some time for a chance of fighting the White man."

In consequence, it was decided to arrive early before the town to prevent any of its inhabitants leaving, and the outskirts of the main angwa was reached half an hour before dawn. Messengers were sent ahead demanding a surrender, and as these were driven off, the patrol rushed forward to the assault, driving the inhabitants out of the lower compounds. While entering these, Corfield saved the life of the man just ahead of him by shooting his assailant just as his spear had reached the man's breast. The people higher up the hill, hearing the firing, at once made off, and the thick mist and heavy rain made any pursuit of them extremely difficult, for the place proved to contain many thousand inhabitants and the little force had, when threading its intricacies, to be kept together. Owing to the downpour it was impossible to burn anything, as the grass roofs would not light, but some of the lower compounds were broken up, and a little food collected.

At this stage, overcome by the cold and wet, and the

illness from which he had imperfectly recovered, Corfield collapsed and was carried by Pragnell and Mr. Rumbold into a native hut, where they removed his soaked clothes and brought him back to consciousness with whisky and hard rubbing.

As the patrol was tied to time, and breaking up the entire town would have taken at least a week, a move was made next day to M'Bal, which proved to be friendly; and after collecting tribute during the next three days from four other villages, Corfield returned with the mining engineers to Bukuru on the 8th, the patrol reaching headquarters at Pankshin two days later.

Captain Pragnell adds to the notes he has so kindly contributed on these three expeditions on which he accompanied Corfield:

"I should like to record how much I appreciated his sterling qualities. His continued cheeriness and ever-ready help, often under rather trying climatic conditions, made it a real pleasure to work with him: and though his memory will always be kept green by those who had the good fortune to know him, it is to be deplored that his innings in life has ended so soon; that innings, however, was one that anyone would be proud of."

The entire outing occupied Corfield a month, and his cheerful comment on his return was:

"The weather was appalling, but otherwise we had a successful and enjoyable trip,"—certainly the man who could find anything enjoyable under such conditions deserves Captain Pragnell's eulogy of his good comradeship. "We visited two new large towns which had never previously been visited . . . one must have had quite 10,000 inhabitants, but neither put up much of a scrap. . . . This Kaleri tribe are great head-hunters, and human skulls are in their eyes potent fetiches, and we found a brace of human skulls, smeared with red clay, placed in front of all the compound doors to prevent our entry. These two towns delayed us for

a week. . . . They, however, would not make submission, and attacked any messenger or isolated small party of ours. I have recommended that a large patrol go down there at the end of the rainy season. Field operations are no joke in this weather, and we were lucky to get back with nothing worse than severe colds. In addition to Pragnell, the soldier man, two mining engineers were with us, prospecting, so that we had quite a cheery little party instead of what would have been by oneself a most depressing promenade, at this time of year. . . . I am extremely glad to get back, as this is the worst month of the whole year. We had to swim our horses and haul loads across on calabashes over three big rivers and many smaller ones."

He was, however, only allowed a short week to recover from the effects of his prolonged exposure, and before the end of August was off again on a three weeks' trip to deal with a Pagan town which had been holding up and robbing passing traders, and afterwards to superintend the clearing and remaking a road from the new railhead to Naraguta—the remaking of roads being a necessity every year after the rains, by which they are often, as may be imagined, completely washed away.

By the end of September the rains had practically ceased, except for an occasional tornado, and Corfield mentions with joy the arrival of his gramophone, "which," he writes, "after fearful adventures has at last turned up here, having made a journey on its own from Berbera. I wrote months ago for it. It is awfully nice to have it again, and it is quite all right, except that some of the records are a bit warped."

Those who have suffered from the damage which the gramophone is so fatally capable of accomplishing, its raucous pollution of a lovely scene, its vulgar profanation of a mysterious silence, its utter incompatibility with the ghostly voices that people the pastoral scene, cannot, unless they have witnessed it, conceive the strange magic of its consolations for the exile to whom nature is a near and



TIN PROSPECTING ON THE ROAD.



*Photos. by Capt. T. W. Pringle*

TIN PROSPECTING ON THE ROAD.





unrelenting enemy, and whose lonely thoughts are for ever haunting the long lanes to home.

There is something queerly pathetic in the reflection that men like Corfield, who would be profoundly depressed by having to confine their life-work to this little island, continue to regard with an inexplicable emotion the prospect of their periodic return to it, and derive an unfailing consolation from the faltering and nasal enunciation by a warped record of some song which they have probably never heard and never tried to hear at home.

The recollection recurs of a little group of men that the wilderness had yielded up for a brief celebration of Christmas, listening with rapt eyes to the wail over the camp fire in the tropic night of a woman's voice enshrined in tin, singing sentiments they would have scouted, in a tongue they did not know, to music beyond their understanding, and of the suspicious silence that followed, to which none of them dared trust their throats till the hyena broke it.

In a letter of early October to Mr. Richardson, Corfield gives some further details of his visit to Kaleri and his views on the Pagans:

"The rains are still going on; it's the rainiest country I've ever been in, six months of it pretty near solid: it turns roads into ravines and most of the country into a morass.

. . . We had a very jolly trip of a month (except for the rain) . . . the country was magnificent, the southern boundary of this district being the edge of the Naraguta plateau, which here is an escarpment, sometimes one sheer fall, sometimes a succession of passes, and the Kaleri Pagans inhabit the mountainous country along the upper edge. In one place we saw a river falling over the plateau in a succession of falls and cascades straight down for 1600 feet. Nassarawa, the province at the bottom, is under 1000 feet above sea-level; come up the plateau into this district and you are from 4000 to 5000 feet above the sea. Some

prospectors who came down with us found tin, so I daresay the opening up of this end of the district will be hurried on. . . . The Pagans of this plateau are most extraordinary birds, and I suppose living in a more natural state than any other people in the world almost. Living in these high hills, they were never conquered or in any way influenced by the semi-civilisation of the Hausa and Fulani invasions.

"Men, women, and children go about absolutely naked, except the women wear a bunch of green leaves, plucked every morning, behind. They have practically no such thing as marriage, men and women cohabiting just as long as it pleases them, and, when they're tired of each other, starting afresh with some one else, the children, if any, becoming the property of the man. They believe, of course, in all kinds of witchcraft and devils, eat any kind of flesh, whether killed by themselves or found dead, and are wonderful bare-backed horsemen, having, of course, no saddles.

"They are a fine, well-built race, some with quite good-looking features; altogether as different from the ordinary Hausa or Fulani native of the greater part of the Protectorate as possible,—the Hausa or Fulani being, of course, a mild Mohammedan and semi-civilised. Very interesting people to deal with and to watch their gradual evolution; let us hope they won't evolve on the lines of the Hausa and most West African natives, who are rotters. I hope I come back to this district after my leave, but the powers that be out here don't seem to worry much about continuity, and switch you off, on your arrival, anywhere where there's a vacancy.

"I am going up for an exam. in the Hausa language at Lokoja on my way home. I have been in a non-Hausa-speaking pagan district all the time, so I don't know ■ I'll pass, but shall be very annoyed if I don't."

In the same month he saw the first-fruits of his earlier expedition:

"This pagan district is settling down very well," he wrote. "Yesterday the chiefs of a group of pagan towns,

the Ganiwari, who have previously always been rebellious, and whom we had a show against last February when I first took over the district, came in here to Bukuru to salute me. They had never seen Bukuru before. They told me they were going to pay tax this year without any trouble, as they were tired of fighting the White man!"

The Hausa has had many admirers who would differ acutely from Corfield's estimate. But Corfield was gifted with an extraordinary discernment of character, in white man or black, which amounted almost to some subliminal sense, and one would be prepared to trust that discernment before the judgment of men with wider experience.

The Hausa is just a cheery trader, with the old Phœnician instinct for a close profit, and with something of the Phœnician liking for adventurous business. But outside of business his soul declines: he has no pride of race, no pride of person; the commercial leanings of our laws appeal to him strongly; he can be made a decent soldier, but he has no warrior inclinations; he takes on readily the veneer of civilisation, and despises the Pagan's inability to imitate him in that respect; indeed, he has always despised the Pagan's indifference to the things which appeal to him as heartily as the Pagan has hated him.

The Pagan has the Somali's wild love of freedom and the untrammelled life. His soul is as clean of convention as his body is of clothes. He cannot bear the weight of a law or of a loin-cloth upon him, and it is the confession of responsibility in tribute that makes him hate it most. Fearless, a born hunter, devoted to the soil, utterly ignorant of and indifferent to the world beyond his village, his simplicity and independence, the rude armed life he lives in his little beehive huts of mud or grass in almost inaccessible fastnesses, his indifference to trade and his almost ceaseless warfare, give him, in spite of his gross superstition, a not unattractive air, which was evidently from the first to Corfield's liking, and there were many indications that Corfield's

influence over the Pagan would be quite as wonderful as that which he exerted on the Somalis; indeed, wherever his liking was attracted he seemed to be able to work miracles.

But that liking never led to a misplaced leniency.

"Just got back after a 12 days' trip round the Monguna country," he wrote in the beginning of November. "I had to burn the town of Monguna for kidnapping and killing the inhabitants of neighbouring towns. They threw some spears and rocks at us on entering the town, and we had to fire and drop some of them before they made up their minds to clear. I had 12 police with me who behaved rather well under the circumstances.

"The next two months I shall probably be here most of the time, as a motor road has to be built between here and Jos and various rest camps constructed. I shall, however, have to take another trip down to Monguna to see what their attitude is now. The rains are over, and we are having quite nice weather; the harvest is on, and all the natives very busy getting in their corn. After that they have a three months' drunk.

"I have read some of the articles on Kano, etc. in the *Times*. . . . They must be taken *cum grano*. The Hausas aren't the wonderful fellows the writer makes out. For natives they have some useful industries, but in other respects he is one of the rottenest types of black men I've come across. If he wasn't we couldn't have conquered this country like we did, with about 4 black soldiers and a boy. We haven't subdued all the pagan tribes yet."

His description of the Pagan celebration of the harvest home ■ somewhat exaggerated—he must have had it on hearsay, but it ■ true that as soon as each household has packed full the little mud granary which holds the entire supply required for the coming year, all the surplus grain will be turned into beer, and the resulting orgies may last a week at a time, with as much breaking of heads as at an Irish fair, and sometimes more serious and even fatal injuries.

But his one drinking bout lasts him for the rest of the year ; there ■ nothing particular for him to do after the harvest is garnered, and a people that has endured six liquid months of rain may claim the advantage of a brief oblivion.

But for his expeditions Corfield would have found the life at Bukuru monotonous, especially when all the tribute was in and he had to start constructing roads and building rest-houses.

"Rather irksome work in a way," he comments, "after Somaliland, where you struck across the desert or the bush, as the case might be, on your old camel and scorned roads ! Too beastly civilised, that's what's the matter with this place ! When the pagans are finally squashed, as they will be in a year or two, there'll be no fun left."

He was to see a little more of it before his work in Nigeria was over, as he was asked to accompany a patrol in the south of the district for ■ month's tour, visiting Monguna and other towns which had been skirted by the patrol in July and August. He accepted with alacrity, but of the tour no record remains, so that this account of his services in Nigeria only covers the year, and tells just what may befall a Political Officer in the course of it. A story thus told week by week has the advantage of presenting facts as they were felt at the time, without the softening or the altered perspective which they inevitably undergo when viewed in retrospect.

His Nigerian letters reveal that no work would have satisfied Corfield which was wholly occupied with fixed conditions. He craved something that was always calling on the energies of the pioneer. The continual uncertainty of Somaliland suited him, because it was impossible to say from one day to another what crisis might not be upon its way. Never was there a moment that permitted an unrelaxed attention, and it was this attitude of perpetual vigilance that gave him the sharpest and happiest consciousness of being.

When he left Nigeria it was with every intention of

returning, and he little dreamed that before the year was over he would be in Somaliland again, training his old retainers again for that last fight with the Powers of Darkness which the British Government seemed so anxious to perpetuate. But an echo from the hell of strife in that unhappy country had reached him in Nigeria, and the pathetic sound of it may as well be recorded here, since it reached him before he returned to England in February 1912.

SOMALILAND, BERBERA,  
21st April 1911.

To R. C. CORFIELD, Esqr.  
Sports Club,  
St. James' Square,  
London, W., England.

HONOURED SIR,—With due respect I, Omer Dorrah the Chief of Majartan tribe, beg to say that when the Mullah had looted me and my tribemen and killed a great numbers from us we came for shelter under the British Govt., and your honour was the first Officer with whom I became acquainted, and you know all about the events and misfortunes of us. Since that period I and my men were granted some aid and rifles to fight with the Mullah, and we fought few times and caused great troubles to the Mullah, but many persons of mine were killed by H'youins and other Somalis the subject of the Govt., and we are so misfortunate that they are giving us always troubles and making false cases against my men in Dist. Court. When I and my men returns from fights of the Mullah we get no rewards from Govt. nor we get rifles, except little rounds. Many rifles which were granted to me and my men by the Govt. had been looted by Somalis, and when I claim against them I do not get back the rifles. I and my men are working for the Govt. as special fighting men, but sorry we are troubles awful by the Somalis who are bearing grudge and grumbles with us on account of our fighting with the Mullah and giving aid to Govt. If I and my tribemen will not get help from the Govt. we cannot live with Isyakh and Dol Bahanta we shall have to go back to our country. Many persons of my tribe came down from up Countries to Berbers and the Govt. gave them no aid, nor they have any properties for support. We are also poor, we hardly support ourselves. The Somaliland up Countries are awful bad in these days, as their are fight and disturbances against each other tribes amongst themselves, i.e. amongst the subject.

"I close with my best compliments to you and General Manning. Please inform General Manning of the aforesaid. I wish you sound health and happiness.—I beg to remain, Honoured Sir, your most Obedt. Sert.,

(i.e.) OMER DORRAH,  
The Chief of Majartan, Berbera.

## **PART V.—UNTEMPERED MORTAR.**

### **CHAPTER XXIV.**

#### **AN OFFICIAL INDICTMENT.**

By the end of March 1910 the change of policy which "His Majesty's Government, after careful consideration of all aspects of the question," had decided upon, was completed. What that policy was has been described already. We have now to observe the new Commissioner, Mr. H. A. Byatt, face to face with the results.

It probably took less than two years to convince him that this last masquerade of irresponsibility was going to prove not only the immediate damnation of thousands of innocent people, but a piece of stupidity which was speedily to recoil on its concocters.

Reading their professed expectations makes one wonder whether their sanity or their humanity was most at fault. To present loaded rifles to savage tribesmen with a known propensity for theft and slaughter, in the expectation that they would be used "for defence purposes" only, seems too childish. A faith to be altogether credible, and a foreign critic would be quite justified in his deduction that the British Government distributed rifles and ammunition to the tribes in the confident expectation that these weapons would be used, as in fact they were used, for the destruction of a population whose claim on our protection had become irksome.

From that point of view our measures for the "pacification" of the country proved a complete success. Had it only been possible to allow it to proceed a little further



there would have been no people in the country left to pacify; they would all have been murdered. In two years a third of the male population ■ stated officially to have been sacrificed to the Government's conception of clemency, and if only the tribes had confined their mutual destructiveness to the interior we should probably have heard nothing further about it till the last of them had disappeared.

It has been told how, before the evacuating force was out of hearing, the rifles distributed at Burao had already become the instruments of internecine strife, and the Commissioner reported that "almost immediately after the concentration at the coast, internal quarrels among the Habr Toljaala culminated in somewhat serious fighting and very shortly afterwards the Habr Yunis tribe, *with the rifles issued to them by the Government for defence purposes*, made a big and successful raid on the Ogaden Somalis living in Abyssinian territory." As the year wore on the area of disorder spread. Before the autumn of 1910 the Aidagalla tribe in the west had been split by civil war, which persisted for the next two years; the eastern half was fighting with the Habr Yunis; the Dolbahanta and Habr Toljaala sections had quarrelled and fought among themselves, and the Mijjarten, *who had been strongly armed by the Government*, had developed into general freebooters. By January 1911 the Habr Yunis had attacked and inflicted heavy losses on the coastal Habr Awal, and though, as the Commissioner puts it, the tribes were "slow to realise it at first," as soon as they were "fully convinced that under no circumstances would the Government attempt active interference or reprisals outside the coast towns," the orgy of bloodshed and burning extended swiftly throughout the country. Very soon the caravan routes became unsafe, and when in its utter impotence the Government armed some of the tribes to secure the safe passage of merchandise, the escort rifles were soon "turned to abuse both in looting trade caravans and in tribal fighting."

A more pitiable position for the representative of a great nation to be forced to occupy ■ would be difficult to imagine.

The Commissioner sat at Berbera hoping to establish the capital as a centre from which "moral influence, advice and support" should radiate through this wild medley of rapine and murder, "in effecting amicable settlements of differences," while the tribesmen were to be impressed with the fact that "under no circumstances would the Government attempt active interference or reprisals." Could any more curiously abortive expedient be conceived?

Meanwhile the "dwindling of prestige and loss of confidence" was having a "very serious effect" on the native Government servants. It was leading them to conceal the truth, and making the fidelity of the police extremely doubtful.

That was how Berbera felt the falling of the political barometer. What was murder on the Haud became on the Coast a "disregard for authority," and, of the two, Berbera felt the lapse of the policeman as a more serious affair. That, indeed, was fortunate, since it was plain that the Home Government was not going to be influenced by the perpetration of atrocities throughout its "Protectorate," and could only be goaded to action by a thrust at its "authority" along the Coast. Another tender point had been touched by a memorial "signed by 39 members of the alien trading community in Berbera—British, Indians, Arabs, Jews, Baniyas, and others—drawing attention to the adverse effect of the present state of affairs upon trade."

The slaughter of a hundred thousand of the people for whose safety we had made ourselves responsible was treated as a matter of no moment, but a memorial about dwindling revenue from thirty-nine alien traders did have some effect.

"The disregard for authority and spread of lawlessness," reported the Commissioner, "if it had appeared at all, would not have grown so rapidly or attained such serious proportions but for the presence of illicit arms in the

country." He does not differentiate between the effects produced by illicit arms and the lawful rifles, the wholesale distribution of which had been the Government panacea. "Anarchy," he announced, was "steadily spreading over the country, with the prospect, under the present system, of becoming permanent."

Meanwhile the Mullah was again arrived upon the scene. In November 1911 he had successfully attacked the Ali Gheri at Bohotleh; in February 1912, after a fruitless attempt to raid the Dolbahanta at Eil Dab, he had defeated them disastrously, driving off all their stock, the survivors reaching Berbera in a deplorable condition. In March, Bohotleh was again assaulted, the remaining Dolbahanta driven out, the Dervishes remaining in possession. In consequence of "the terror inspired by the unspeakable atrocities and mutilations practised upon the vanquished," the entire Nogal Valley was evacuated by the tribes, and the Mullah once more boasted his intention to descend upon the coast and sack Berbera, a threat the accomplishment of which should have been quite possible to a leader of greater ability and restraint, the policy of the British Government having been for two years an obvious invitation to the perpetration of massacres at Bulhar and Berbera.

Small wonder that in April 1912 the Commissioner reported that "the present condition is profoundly unsatisfactory, and that the future holds out a prospect of development for the worse rather than for the better."

"The policy of non-intervention and inactivity has been given full operation for two years, and has disappointed hopes and expectations."

Tribal organisation, which he quaintly describes as "the first line of defence," had "finally and completely given way," he reports the country as "full of arms," and makes the somewhat belated discovery that "the peace and prosperity, and ultimately the safety, of the coast towns depends upon the existence of peace in the interior, or at least upon the

maintenance of order within a reasonable radius of, say, 50 miles."

It will be observed as significant that the peace of the interior ■ only suggested to be of importance as ensuring the safety of the coast towns, it being made once more abundantly evident that so far as the Home Government were concerned the interior might commit what atrocities it pleased so long as the coast towns, with their vain pretence of authority, were not incommoded.

Fifty miles is the radius given, not that fifty miles was of the least use to ensure "peace and prosperity," but it did afford a sufficient opportunity to obtain troops from Aden if the Mullah's attentions became too pressing.

That paragraph must be remembered, since it provides a clue to the condemnation which was so hurriedly and inadvisably heaped upon Richard Corfield's action, when he ventured to put the troops under his command to the uses for which he imagined they had been intended.

His presence in the interior was apparently not expected to put a stop to the "unspeakable atrocities and mutilations," or to restore peace and prosperity, but to provide for the coastal towns a certain area of security, so that the pretence of British authority might continue to be paraded.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### ALTERNATIVES.

IN justice to Mr. Byatt it must be remembered that he had no official part in formulating the policy which he was obliged to exhibit in so unfavourable a light. Mr. Byatt was only Secretary to Administration when the evacuation was carried out.

He had been Commissioner for little more than a year, when, in April 1912, he pointed out in an able dispatch the follies of which the Home Government had been guilty, and suggested alternative policies for their consideration.

These were: An expedition for the pacification and occupation of the interior. The establishment of small military posts on the main roads. A continuation of the existing policy. Complete evacuation. The maintenance on the coast of a small native camel corps.

The first of these he, wisely, did not advise, and was plainly not much more in love with the second, though mentioning that the adoption of either would be warmly welcomed in the Protectorate. The third—the craven policy of “non-intervention and inactivity”—he trusted to his dispatch to settle. The fourth he left to the light of political considerations. The fifth he unreservedly commended. A mobile striking force, not less than 70 strong, maintaining order by coercion within fifty miles or so of Berbera, would, he thought, “prevent a descent upon the coast, and . . . make for peace among the coastal tribes.”

Nothing further than that was apparently intended. The interior was to be abandoned to the Mullah’s “unspeak-

able atrocities and mutilations" so long as there was anyone left to murder and mutilate; all thought of protecting the trade of the country was to be abandoned, and only an effort made to provide behind the coast a brief border of security.

So he asked for 70 men to ensure a fifty miles' warning to Berbera of any trouble on the way to it, and held out the alluring prospect, if the experiment were successful, that it might open the way to dispensing with the additional troops imported to strengthen the garrisons of Berbera and Bulhar.

But even over so moderate a proposal the Home Government haggled. The Commissioner had depicted a condition of affairs which, if permitted by any other Government, would have goaded to fury the Aborigines' Protection Society, but since it had been perpetrated under the Liberal banner of "Non-intervention and inactivity," the Colonial Secretary knew that he could safely profess a complete indifference, and address himself to the question of cost. The Commissioner had asked for 70 native policemen, one to every thousand square miles of country, but mighty England was going to bargain before he got them, and seven months more of anarchy were to be the consequence.

The Colonial Secretary began by suggesting the postponement of all plans until the Commissioner's arrival in England, thus securing at least ten more weeks of procrastination, and the Commissioner, assenting, begged permission to inform the friendlies, "that Government inactivity will not be permanent,"—a truly pathetic request; and suggested a constabulary force 150 strong, with three officers, at an annual cost of £7500—a suggestion which was acceded to a fortnight later.

But by that time the season of Haga, the hot monsoon on the coast, had made the pursuit of any preparations impossible, and the interior was abandoned to its dust-storms and human devils.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE SLAVE OF GOD.

IN Mr. Byatt's telegram of 12th June 1912, he pointed out that it was "absolutely essential to appoint a man of ability and experience to command," and therefore very strongly recommended "Corfield of Northern Nigeria, if he will accept."

The doubt expressed in that proviso proved that Mr. Byatt knew his man. Richard Corfield was of the type which, though more of a doer than a talker, has a great facility and picturesqueness of expression when strongly moved. The shame and rage he had felt when forced to take part in the evacuation of the country had found vent in speech which remained in the memory of those who heard it. The men who had been withdrawn from the interior, where, after years of patience, justice, and fortitude, and an unswerving adherence to their word, they had won from the wild tribesmen so great a measure of faith, obedience, and even devotion, might well be forgiven if, when forced to slink out of the country, they spoke inadvisedly and only too pointedly with their tongues. No one can fully appreciate their feelings who has not been set the slow and difficult task of winning back the confidence of a subject and savage race, not by great deeds and a show of arms, but by the sheer virtue that emanates from personality; and, when that has at last been accomplished, been forced by superior orders to hand over the thousands who have made themselves dependent on his good faith to an atrocity of torture we cannot face even in print.

The strain which had so tried Richard Corfield's self-restraint during that pretentious retirement to the coast found vent when he arrived there in the speaking of his mind. Hence that qualification of "if he will accept."

At this juncture the Commissioner received on 3rd June a letter from the Mullah, full of his old humour, which ran :

"Praise be to God who created, who leads and misleads, who gives and withholds, who raises up and casts down, who gives life and death. Prayers and salutations to our Prophet Mohamed.

"Thereafter . . . This is an answer to the words sent by the British, and I say, oh, British Community, I inform you that your letter which you sent to me is altogether hostile to us, and it does not accord with our condition.

"And although your letter was as I say, I overlooked it, and I write you an answer which is better than your letter. And I do this solely in the desire for settlement and peace, otherwise I would have done even as you did. And now I inform you that I am seeking for settlement and peace. If you grant this request I will not move about after that at all. Bear this in your mind. And I ask you when there can be the necessary meeting on the subject?" Signing himself—

"From the slave of God and the poor man,

"MOHAMED BIN ABDILLA."

Meanwhile the hesitations of the Secretary of State had effectually postponed the recruiting of the new force until the close of the hot season, and in the interval Mr. Byatt replied to the Mullah's effusion, congratulating him on a wiser mind, but demanding as a guarantee six months' good conduct.

Early in July the Commissioner reported the condition of the interior to be growing steadily worse, and that no improvement could be expected "until after the formation of the proposed Camel Corps, which, by *patrolling the main*



*roads*, will ensure the safety of caravans and travellers between the interior and the coast."

It ■ not difficult to endorse Mr. Byatt's summing up on leaving the country that "no good purpose can be served by any attempt to minimise the gravity of the present political situation in this Protectorate."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CAMELS.

MEANWHILE the command of the new Camel Corps had been offered to Richard Corfield, and he had accepted it. As may be imagined, he had misgivings. The memory was still fresh of that last deplorable year in the country, but Corfield never bore a grudge against anyone, and to be told that he was needed was a claim upon him already. He took as a sign of repentance the Government's recantation of their old faith in "coastal concentration," and he would be the very first to help anyone, man or minister, to an amended life. Though for two years he had earnestly foretold the catastrophe which had occurred, he never made the slightest reference to the accuracy of his predictions.

He was of that generous temper which at once forgets all injurious treatment from a man who is down, and so astonishingly free from egotism that he seemed to have no personal apprehension from which to resent anything, and always showed the natural inability of every sincere soul to suspect the sincerity of another.

Also his affection for the Somalis, and the shame he had felt at seeming to fail them, made him willing to be the instrument to restore their confidence. The appointment, moreover, offered a very large measure of responsibility, and responsibility as a bait was always sure to tempt him. He had the strong man's liking for being "on his own," and for situations which demanded instant determination on his own judgment, and nowhere in the Empire would he have been likely to find a more attractive combination of responsi-

bility, danger, and isolation than was offered by a native Camel Company in the heart of a country which had been found perilous for thousands of trained soldiers.

He was offered the appointment on the 18th June, four days before the intended date of his departure for Nigeria, where he had already dispatched his stores.

"I saw them at the C.O. on Saturday and Monday," he wrote to his sister. "They have apparently found out that their evacuation policy is a mistake, and are forming a Camel Corps of 200 men with 3 officers, and have offered me command. I shall remain a Northern Nigerian official, but am seconded for two years for service in Somaliland. . . . This is all verbal, so I don't know the exact particulars, or what precisely I'm supposed to be going to do. This is to wait till I see the man administering Somaliland, who is on his way home."

Mr. Byatt apparently arrived home about the beginning of August, and, satisfied as to his future duties, Corfield sailed on his last mission a fortnight later.

He wrote from Port Said on 27th, and mentions having made acquaintance with Mr. Dunn, one of his lieutenants, on the voyage, liking him very much, and thinking him "just the man for the job," and having heard from a magistrate in the Somali Coast Service, who was also on board, that the friendlies with few exceptions would hail the formation of the Camel Corps with joy.

He reached Aden on 2nd September, and left the same day for Berbera, returning to Aden on 7th September with Mr. Dunn to buy camels. "I shall probably make my headquarters at Sheikh Osman, a town about seven miles from here inland," he writes from Aden.

"In a fortnight or so I hope to return to Berbera, leaving Dunn to finish the camel-buying. Gibb, who was offered the other appointment in the Camel Corps, has accepted, and will be available in about three weeks.

"During my three days' stay in Berbera I tried to get

hold of the political situation, but it is absolutely chaos, and I can't tell in the least yet how the Camel Corps scheme will go down. The majority of the natives, I think, were genuinely pleased to see me back, and to hear the Government propose taking action in the interior once more. The majority of the headmen have come in and spoken to this effect. There are two or three tribes, however, that have thriven on anarchy, waxed strong, and amassed large quantities of rifles and camels, and these people I have not yet seen, and I think they will probably give some trouble to start with. What the Mullah is about no one in Berbera seems to know."

It will be observed that after his interviews at the Colonial Office and with Mr. Byatt he still retained the impression which had been communicated to the natives that "the Government propose taking action in the interior once more." There had evidently been no talk to him of "patrolling the main roads" only.

The necessity for some action in the interior was becoming more pressing. Mr. G. F. Archer, the Acting Commissioner, reported on 7th August:

"Acts of lawlessness are now of daily occurrence, and recent intertribal fighting and looting on the caravan roads in the close vicinity of the coast towns has increased the gravity of the situation." He further goes on to report that camels belonging to residents of Berbera have been looted "within four miles of the town," also an unsuccessful raid two days previously "within seven miles of Berbera," an attack on the Dolbahanta "who were returning to the Ain with 90 rifles and 6000 rounds of ammunition supplied by Government," 24 men being killed and many wounded; more recently still a serious collision between the Habr Yunis and Musa Ismail, in which the losses on one side alone amounted to 40 men.

On 11th September he alludes to an outrage committed by Habr Awal, culminating in an attack on a caravan ■

the Habr Yunis, 25 miles from Berbera, in which 80 laden camels were captured and 21 men killed, and concludes his telegram: "Absolutely necessary in my opinion exert Government authority without further delay to retain hold situation. Fear Yunis reprisals on large scale and the retirement of Habr Awal into Bulhar. Propose therefore impose fine 500 camels for this outrage in addition to ordinary restitution, recoverable immediately 100 Camel Corps ready operate; serious resistance improbable. Your approval by telegraph urgently solicited."

The reply sent him a week later ran:

"Proposal approved of if and when Camel Corps sufficiently organised to undertake operations.—HARCOURT."

On the day when this telegram was sent, the Camel Corps, owing to the Government's previous inability to make up their mind to sanction its existence, numbered one camel, not a very good one, and no men.

On the strength of the single camel the fine was inflicted, and Mr. Archer reported the effect of it as being undoubtedly good, there having been a marked cessation of intertribal fighting: "The tribesmen, seeing the preparations in progress for the formation of the Camel Corps, are now marking time and awaiting the settlement of their affairs under Government auspices. . . . That the more responsible Somalis are sick at heart at the prevailing state of lawlessness in the country there can be, I think, little doubt . . . they candidly admit that they cannot hope to adjust their differences unaided, and for this reason it is likely that, as a whole, they will welcome any action taken by the Government which tends to restore to the country some measure of peace and security for life and property."

The passage of a camel through the eye of a needle seems only a shade more wonderful than this elevation of Government influence on the back of the single animal—on the strength of which Mr. Harcourt's permission was unconsciously accorded.

Meanwhile, camels were considerably exercising Richard Corfield's patience.

"I have moved from the Residency, Aden, to this place," he writes—on 17th September—from Sheikh Osman, "which is an Arab town about 11 miles from Aden. I can't get forrard with the camel buying at all. The Turks and Italians have both been buying here largely for the war, and have skinned the country, and there are nothing but young and immature camels to be had. I have only bought one up to date. I don't know what we are going to do about it, unless we send to the Soudan. This is a pretty little oasis, much cooler and pleasanter than Aden, and I should be enjoying it if only the camels would come in, but it's weary work waiting with everything hung up on account of them. I meant to go back to Berbera on 23rd and leave Dunn here, but I can't until things get going. The Arabs here are very independent and truculent, but interesting, and I am going to try and get an escort and go up country farther if I can do nothing here. . . . I am sitting as I write in a three-acre palm grove, with big gold mohur trees scattered about, beautiful birds and water—but just outside are miles and miles of blinding white scorched-up desert, stretching to the sea on one side and the hills 50 miles inland on the other."

Failing to obtain camels he went across to Berbera to interview the Acting Commissioner, being taken *via* Perim by the Governor of Aden on the R.I.M. ship *Dalhousie*. Mr. Archer agreed to cable home for authority to offer a bigger price for the camels, and Corfield returned to Sheikh Osman, and by the 23rd was in possession of 11 camels. It was a slow game, he wrote, especially with the thermometer well over 100° between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

By the 2nd October he had purchased 42, and had hopes of getting all he required by the beginning of November, and early in that month to get into camp up country with a proportion of the Camel Corps.

"Fairly busy this morning," he writes, "branding camels, which ■ rather a strenuous job as they want a lot of holding."

On the 10th, he was in Berbera again with 68 camels, and practically his full complement of men. There had been no difficulty in getting the men when it was known that he was to command them. The clothing had arrived, but the saddles were still on their way.

The total had reached 79 by 15th October, and Mr. Gibb had arrived from Bulhar, his services, with all the work on hand, being very acceptable.

"The state of the country is shocking at present," wrote Corfield; "all the tribes and their stock, instead of grazing on the uplands of the Haud, are crowded together round Berbera and the Golia range through fear of the Mullah's raiders. Starvation and smallpox account for numerous deaths every day in the town, and I am besieged every day by hundreds of applicants for employment in the Camel Corps as a means of living. The Government is of course absolutely discredited, and Government messengers have been killed within two miles of Berbera."

The total of camels was up to 96 by 24th October, and the men were being put through a musketry course.

"Poor Dunn is still at Sheikh Osman, camel buying," writes Corfield from Berbera. "Gibb, the other man, is turning out a splendid fellow, a very hard worker and just the right sort, I think. . . . The *Fox*, 2nd class cruiser, has been in here for four days. She brought in a dhow captured gun-running, and we've been having rather a gay time in consequence. Football, tennis, and polo matches, and on Sunday a picnic on camels to a place 8 miles out—incidentally the first time, since we evacuated, that white men had been farther than 1 mile from Berbera. We're plucking up courage!!! The unfortunate sailor-men came back sore all over, never having been on camels before, and swearing they'd never be again. It was awfully funny to see them."

His next letter of 31st October shows the other side of the medal:

"We are up to our eyes in work, Gibb and I here, Dunn in Aden. We now number 120, a Maxim has also been sanctioned, and we are now busy training a gun-team. I hope with luck to leave here for up country somewhere about 15th November, when the fun should begin. Usual daily routine ■ as follows:

"Up at 5.30 a.m., ride out to the range and do musketry till 9 a.m., then home, shave, bath, and breakfast.

"10.30.—Office, signing indents and requisitions for stores, equipment, etc., and issuing them.

"12 to 1.—Generally up at the Residency for a consultation with the Commissioner. Lunch.

"2.30.—Prolonged pow-wows with chiefs and akils from up country about the general state of affairs up there, and how we are going to settle the innumerable feuds which have cropped up.

"4 p.m.—Parade—knocking the men into shape and smartness.

"5 p.m.—Stables, 120 camels; and that about finishes the day, with innumerable little odds and ends continually cropping up.

"Everybody here, of course, is immensely interested in seeing what will happen when the Camel Corps advance up country, and it certainly is interesting; the Somali is a very hard person to gauge. Personally, I think, there'll be no trouble until we have to punish some tribe or other, when I think there's bound to be a fairly pretty scrap."

It was of those strenuous days that Lieutenant Rose Price writes his recollection:

"I met Corfield at Aden . . . he had obtained permission at that time to make use of the ship I was serving in . . . the *Dalhousie* . . . to transport the camels for his force. . . . The camels were brought alongside in lighters, and lifted inboard with the ship's appliances, and stowed away in



one of the troop decks, and I well remember poor Corfield coming along and watching the operations, and personally satisfying himself as to their comfort, etc. . . . I found him an especially charming and interesting man to work with, from a 'sailor-man's' point of view, and I couldn't help being struck with the practical suggestions he put forward, from time to time, *en voyage*, with regard to the camels, in which he naturally took a big interest. . . . He was very popular with my brother-officers, and often used to come off and lunch or dine with us when we ran over to Berbera and he happened to be there from the interior. . . . I remember when I called away a cutter to take him ashore the last time I saw him, remarking to him not to go *too far*, and he only laughed in that whimsical way of his, fixing his eyeglass a bit more firmly in his eye."



CORFIELD'S LION CUT



SHIPPING CAMELS AT DORT FOR THE CONSTABULARY.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE CONSTABULARY AT WORK.

MR. BYATT had returned to Berbers on 22nd October, and a fortnight later he was explaining to the Colonial Office the causes of the delay which had taken place, not that any excuses were required, as the Office had been throughout the responsible party. Though 125 out of 161 camels had been obtained, the saddlery for them had not arrived from India, and of the saddles so recklessly distributed in 1910 only 30 sets had been recovered. The remainder had been ordered from Bikanir, that paradise of camelry, but none so far had been received.

The Corps had been recruited up to 150, its full strength, and so many recruits had been forthcoming that some acquaintance with musketry had been required as a qualification. The Corps had been divided into two companies, each of four sections, for rapid movement in the bush; and the Maxim gun team was being instructed by Mr. Gibb. The dispatch continues: "The existence of this team will, I think, be of the greatest moral value to the Corps, even if it is never required for actual service, a contingency which at present seems remote."

On 8th November Corfield had 138 camels and hoped to complete by the 18th. The end of the month was now the earliest date on which he hoped to be able to "weigh out," owing to the delay in obtaining the saddles.

"Our plan," he explains, "as arranged with Byatt, the Commissioner, is for us to move out and camp at a place called Manderé, about 47 miles S.S.W. of here. From there we

shall make arrangements to punish (by way of looting their camels) a tribe which has given much trouble of late, the Solle-Gudub.

"If this is successful, it will be a lesson to the other tribes in the west, and there will not be much more trouble amongst our friendlies that way. We shall then move east to Burao or thereabouts, and do likewise with a tribe called the Rer Benin. Peace should then reign again amongst our friendlies, who at present are all out of hand, owing to the late weak policy of the Government, and we ought then to be able to turn our attention to the Mullah.

"Things are so bad at present that raiding parties of tribesmen come down and drive off camels belonging to the town of Bulhar, 48 miles along the coast west of here, within sight of the Residency, and nothing is done. They did it twice this week, killing women and children. I have got nearly all my old headmen and retainers back with me now (at least those that aren't killed!)."

The outrages to which he refers, of which British officers had to be helpless witnesses, were doing much to obliterate what was left of British prestige along the coast.

It was consequently with a great relief that Corfield was able to report on 29th November:—

"We leave Berbera for Mandera next Wednesday, the 4th December. We shall be quite a small army:

165 riding camels,

10 pony men.

20 foot men.

300 burden camels and attendants.

1 Maxim-Nordenfeldt gun.

"Dunn is still at Aden and will not come up with us, but will have to join after.

"I am immensely looking forward to the move, and the eyes of the whole country are upon it! To the natives it is quite an epoch-making affair after the Government's sphere of action having been confined to the coast for nearly

three years. We are still short of 23 camels and about 30 saddles, but these will join us later. By Christmas we ought with luck to have carried out a very pretty little raid and raised the prestige of the Government a little from the depths to which it has sunk."

Mr. Byatt was plainly of the same opinion. In a long dispatch, of which only extracts are given, he writes: "The state of anarchy and internecine warfare among the friendly tribes which led me to propose the formation of a Camel Corps to patrol the immediate hinterland still exists, and has, in fact, become accentuated. The sedative effect of the announcement of the raising of this Corps in August last was not of long duration, and during the past month there has been a marked increase both of preconcerted raids, and of isolated murders and petty thieving on the main caravan roads."

It was surely almost too much to expect that a Camel Company which took four months to muster would have much effect after three years' experience of the Government's capacity for "non-intervention and inactivity," and one can accept the probability that the Habr Yunis did "not credit the general belief that the Government intends to enforce order," though inclined to doubt, with Corfield, that there was any generality in such a conception. The Mullah also, Mr. Byatt described as "waiting to see to what extent the rumoured activity of the Government will develop," and it would be extremely interesting, ■ one could learn what exactly were Mr. Byatt's own views on the subject.

Did he really think that "a condition of peace and mutual understanding" was going to be restored among the friendlies by a mere patrolling of the roads and immediate hinterland, or that the same activities would restrain the Mullah's inclination "to resume offensive operations on a larger scale"?

■ would be manifestly unfair to saddle the Commissioner's intelligence, ■ revealed by many admirable dispatches, with such a conclusion.

Indeed, his next telegram discloses with what a delicate diplomacy he could engineer a consent.

He dispatched the Camel Corps on 4th December to Mandera, where once a fibre factory had flourished, a centre from which an attack could be made with equal convenience on either section of the Habr Yunis. Corfield reported their attitude as independent, declining to disgorge loot, and likely to resist force by Government; Mandera natives, after arrival of the Camel Corps, having raided towards Bulhar 48 villages of the Habr Awal, killing all the male children and retiring with the loot.

"Other tribes, therefore," Mr. Byatt reported, "closely watch Government action. . . . Unless prompt action taken, Government authority will become dead letter, and our position impossible at the coast, where Habr Awal, already much excited, will become unmanageable. It is impracticable to effect surprise from Mandera and inadvisable at the moment to withdraw from there."

The Commissioner, therefore, proposed to hold Mandera with the 119th Infantry, and with the Camel Corps and some of the looted tribe to round up the offenders by a 30-mile march to the west, and drive them northward up against the holding force. Whole of operation to occupy a fortnight and actual raid three days.

The dispatch concluded:—

"I should act on own responsibility but that I propose to move Indian troops, and I therefore communicate with you. It is absolutely essential to inflict prompt punishment in order to assert authority of Government; delay might have dangerous consequences. I urgently request your early approval by telegraph."

His proposals were approved.

As a military adventure the attack on the Sala Gudab was entirely successful; whether it could be commended from a political point of view is another matter. There were men on the coast, well qualified to judge, who held

that the punishment inflicted was needlessly severe and that a large capture of stock was all that was required. Even had that been the case it is not always possible to avoid loss of life when engaged in raiding operations of considerable magnitude, and though the tribesmen succeeded in doing very little damage to the Camel Corps, it was not for want of trying, only their elevation being at fault.

It must also be remembered that the Sula Gudab, by which name a combination of three tribes was known, had been thriving on violence for a long time, and the total suppression of their raiding activities was essential to a return of the district to more settled conditions.

With such considerations, however, Corfield had nothing to do. He received his orders, and his execution of them was admirable. It was the first big thing he had done "on his own," and he not only proved his ability to carry out a considerable manoeuvre, but the performance of his raw force showed what an extraordinary capacity he possessed for turning the most excitable material into steady soldiers.

The detachment of the 119th arrived in Mandera on Sunday 15th, and next day Corfield, with every man of the Camel Corps, which was 39 below strength, and 12 Berbera Mounted Police, with ten days' rations, moved out towards Robleh in the direction of Hargeisa and away from their objective, so as to rouse no suspicion of their ultimate intention.

They arrived at Robleh on 17th, collected there in the next two days 75 horsemen of one tribe and 250 men of another, and at sundown of the 20th moved eastwards by a circuitous route to place themselves behind the Sula Gudab and then drive them towards Adadleh, to which place 100 men of the 119th had been dispatched from Mandera. The surprise was complete, and for some hours the stock was driven southwards without opposition. At 8 a.m. a party of riflemen, endeavouring to protect a mob of some 400 camels, opened fire, but after twenty minutes' fighting the camels



were captured, 14 of the enemy being killed. An hour later the Sula Gudab again opened fire, and in a fight which lasted for some little time 20 of them were killed. Much more stock might have been captured, but, as the operation became extended, Corfield was afraid of driving off stock belonging to other tribes, and, being anxious to get into open country before nightfall, made his way through the thick bush and camped at 5.15 on the open Goriale Plain. The Corps behaved admirably, and though twenty-one hours out of the first twenty-four out of Robleh were spent in the saddle, only one animal had to be left behind. The stock looted was 1282 camels, 11,300 sheep, 170 cows, 17 donkeys, and 6 horses, all of which were successfully driven to Mandera, and proved ample to satisfy the claims of looted tribes and give a share to the irregulars who had assisted.

Perhaps this will be the best place to consider the General Instructions issued by Mr. Byatt for the guidance of the Commandant of the Camel Constabulary, as it is tactfully called. Corfield's conception of the ends which were to be served by the Camel Corps was gleaned, of course, from more intimate sources, but it is important to realise how many of his ideas were based on an official document.

At the outset one finds Corfield counselled to encourage an impression among the Somalis that the Government is about to reoccupy the former posts in the interior, as the delusion may serve to simplify the work of the Constabulary. But, he is told, "the creation of the Corps does not in any way imply a reversal of the accepted policy of coastal concentration."

Now quite apart from the utterly mistaken assertion that dealings with natives can ever be simplified by encouraging them to believe a delusion, what in the light of that concluding paragraph becomes of the fact that the creation of the Camel Corps was put forward as an alternative to "(3) a continuation of the present policy"?





An expedient cannot be at once an alternative and a continuation—that ■ having it both ways with a vengeance—and the Commissioner expressly urged upon the Colonial Secretary the necessity “to reconsider the question of the attitude to be adopted henceforward towards the affairs of Somaliland.” The Camel Corps represented that reconsideration, and it was a confession that the policy adopted in 1910 had broken down as completely and disastrously as the Commissioner had represented it as having done in his memorandum of 30th April; of which, be it remembered, the public has only been permitted to read an extract.

The next paragraph of the Instructions absolutely contradicts its previous statement by declaring the object of the Corps being “to put an end to that constant internal warfare among the friendlies which renders them incapable of resisting aggression from the outside,” Lord Crewe having laid it down in the most emphatic manner that “coastal concentration” would confine our administration entirely to three towns on the coast, and that the tribesmen must thenceforth rely on themselves entirely for the settlement of their own affairs, in spite of Captain Cordeaux’ repeated protests that the tribesmen were “quite incapable of taking any combined action without local political control.”

Not only were the Somalis to be encouraged in a false expectation that Government would reoccupy the interior, but they were to be left with the false hope that their claims of the past two years were to be speedily settled. This, however, was only going to be done “from time to time as expediency requires”—a very specious phrase, and a very mistaken one in native affairs.

Paragraph viii. declares that the Constabulary “is to be regarded as a striking force which may be used to repress disorder and to insist on compliance with any decision arrived at in Berbera.”

Also the impression was to be fostered that the Corps existed not “for the purpose of making war on the friendlies,”

but "solely to give them protection and assistance," an impression which in the Somali mind would certainly include security from the Mullah: and the Instructions conclude with the statement that "I intend for some little time to come you should not form a temporary base more than fifty miles—a day's march—from the coast. Subsequent movements will be dictated by developments."

A sentence which may not have carried exactly the same meaning to the minds of the Commandant and the Colonial Secretary.

In the early days of railway travel in Russia, when there was but a single line between St. Petersburg and Moscow, two countrymen got into the train at an intermediate station.

"Where are you going?" asked one of them.

"To Petersburg. And you?" asked the other.

"To Moscow."

And they congratulated each other on the convenience of this new mode of travel.

On the Camel Corps line, it was Mr. Byatt who, as station-master, pointed out the advantages of travelling by the same road to diametrically opposite destinations.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### BURAO REOCCUPIED.

THE affair at Mandera, whatever its demerits, had an immediately quieting effect upon the country, but it had also for the Government a more inconvenient consequence; for the tribes not being able to appreciate the nice points of resemblance in apparently antithetical policies, attributed the reappearance of an armed British force in the country to a determination the reverse of that which had decreed its withdrawal, and two trustworthy akhils of the Dolbahanta arrived in Berbera to lay before the Commissioner the hard case they were in, and to plead for a little of that "protection and assistance" mentioned in his instructions to the Commandant. The Mullah was bombarding the tribe with overtures and threats, pointing out "that they have been severely punished for their allegiance to an infidel Government, which affords them no real protection," and urging them either to throw in their lot with their own kin, or to stand aside and allow the Mullah a free passage through the Ain Valley; their safety or destruction to depend on their decision, a month being allowed them to make up their minds.

The akhils admitted that unless supported by Government they dared not face the Mullah, but were anxious to stand up to him. If forced to go over they would take all the Government rifles and ammunition, which would prove a valuable acquisition, and with the Dolbahanta on his side the Mullah's depredations would once more recommence.

Mr. Byatt thought the situation serious, especially as there was now "a wide belief that the Government, by means

of the Camel Corps, . . . intends to ensure their safety." He continues: "I believe that if the Camelry were to move at once to the Ain, it would attract a large body of friendlies, and could, without difficulty, defeat and drive out the small Dervish parties now there." But he adds: "The Corps was not raised for this purpose, and I feel that my discretionary power does not justify me in using it for this object without your expressed consent, though it is possible that the Dervishes would not await attack, since they are said to be making constant and minute inquiries as to any movement of troops."

He advises, in the event of refusal, an alternative course, "not altogether satisfactory, to move the Camelry slowly in the direction of the Ain to Sheikh, and by degrees to Burao or Ber . . . to inspire the Dolbahanta to take the initiative, which is extremely doubtful, or to alarm the Dervish parties into retirement. . . . The Camelry, if it is to achieve its primary object, should display continued activity, and must in any case shortly proceed to Sheikh and Burao to deal with local trouble in those districts, and to open the road to caravan traffic."

Wise words, but what worlds apart from the conception that the Camel Corps was to be nothing more than a Coastal Constabulary, an idea which finds its repetition in Mr. Harcourt's reply, when, declining to sanction the expedition to the Ain, he leaves to Mr. Byatt's discretion the question of an advance as far as Ber. The Ain Valley seems to have been regarded with a special disfavour by the Colonial Office since the day when one of its clerks, after writing a potent dispatch against its military occupation, asked to be shown where the wretched place was on the map. Mr. Harcourt would not permit an advance to the Ain, though it was strongly urged by the Commissioner; but he allowed the advance to Ber, though agreeing with the Commissioner that it would be of very little use. "A pleasant infirmity of purpose," says a Russian writer, "is not

altogether without its uses in Departments of State." The maxim seems to have found a resting-place in some of the Downing Street doves.

Permission to move the Camel Corps out of the fifty-mile radius towards Burao was only granted on 24th January, and could not have been received at Berbera till a fortnight later; but long before then Mr. Byatt had moved it from Mandera to Sheikh, and ordered it on to Burao to check the tribal fighting among the Habr Toljale. Thus, within a month of the first movement of the Corps, the fiction of its being a Coastal Constabulary was completely abandoned, and "active participation in affairs in the interior of the Protectorate," which Mr. Harcourt declared on 24th January to have been definitely abandoned, had recommenced before even his dispatch was written, and, as we shall see, was placidly accepted by him a little later.

On the 14th January, Corfield, his hands very full of work, writes from Sheikh Camp:

"We made a most successful raid, and the effect has been excellent in quietening down our friends the Somalis. So much so that I was able to move from Mandera on 11th, and am now on my way to Burao, and am camping here two days, waiting for a convoy of supplies from Berbera.

"It is sad to see this place, all the bungalows broken down and deserted. . . . Dunn has joined us at last, after having been to Mocha, Hodeidah, and all over the place in Arabia, and finally given it up as a bad job. We are still 16 short, and so it has been decided to buy ponies instead, and I now have 150 camels and 24 pony men, which really suits me better, if anything. We shall be in Burao by the 16th. . . . There are some 200 horsemen at Ainabo, near Wadamago, and some of the Dolbahanta tribesmen are said to have gone over to the Mullah, and our advance to Burao is in order to try and prevent any more going over to him. We shall be some 100 miles from the coast at Burao. . . . It is awfully interesting trekking about up country now, with the feeling



that the whole place belongs to you, nobody but the Camel Corps being allowed to leave the coast."

He arrived at Burao on the date mentioned, camping in one of the old political saribas, and at once settled to the stiff task ahead of him. "Busy collecting camels and other stock," he writes on 29th January, "to hand over to the Abyssinians as compensation for raids made by our tribes. This settlement was made in 1910 (December) and has never yet been enforced, the Government being powerless on the coast. The Abyssinians are very annoyed with us for not carrying out our agreement, and, indeed, I think this question, which threatened to become acute, was one of the reasons that decided the Government to raise the Camel Corps.

"I have collected over 900 camels to date, and sent them up to Jigjiga, the nearest Abyssinian post. To-day I have just finished one intertribal quarrel which has been raging for the last 2½ years, by a judgment involving the payment of 440 camels and 1000 sheep. This I have to see done inside of 20 days: the time I have given them to pay. The whole secret of keeping the tribes quiet really is to *enforce one's judgments*."

The italics are his, and doubtless he had in his mind the judgments given in the coast courts which there was no power to enforce, and which only brought our administration of justice into disrepute.

On the 8th February he started for Oadweina, some 35 miles to the west, having collected 800 camels from the Habr-Yunis during the three weeks he had been in Burao, a striking tribute to the influence he exerted. Mr. Dunn was left with two sections in Burao, and from Oadweina he dispatched Mr. Gibb with two more to Mandera to see to the paying over of stock in settlement of disputes he had decided whilst there. He himself went on to Jaleh, and thence sent off 600 camels to the Abyssinians in payment of past raids.

"I stayed there a few days," he relates on his return to

Burao, "and then moved back to Berato, settling tribal disputes, etc. It was a perfectly peaceful trip—everybody seeming willing to do what they were told. . . . We have now been three months up country, and have really worked wonders in pacifying the tribes. There has not been a fight since Dec. 6th! Wonderful for this troubled land."

Wonderful it indeed was; Nothing like it had ever before been accomplished since the British occupation began. Never had the country been in such a state before, its perennial discords terribly accentuated by Government arms and ammunition, left to do the very worst they could accomplish by being put into the hands of men, always undisciplined, and emasculated by twenty-six years of more or less paternal Government.

That a force of 150 tribesmen, under three British officers, should be able to accomplish anything at all in that whirlpool of passionate anarchy seemed unlikely enough, that it should do what Corfield succeeded in doing was utterly incredible, and one has not the least hesitation in saying that no man but Corfield could possibly have accomplished it.

He speaks in a later letter, after successes even more astonishing, of finding it extremely embarrassing, being regarded as an emissary of the Almighty. But it was just because he seemed to the Somalis endowed with all the qualities they counted to Allah that his success was so amazing.

He stood for an immutable justice which could not be influenced by bribes or pleading, for truth of speech and deed which appeared to those deliberate liars little less than divine, for a patience unshakable as Fate itself, for an unfaltering instrument of retribution, and, with all these, for a humour, shrewdness, and understanding which appealed to their romantic and impressionable souls. On the enforcing of one's judgments, Corfield laid stress; but it is only when the judgment is applauded of all men that settlement follows its enforcement. There is among savage people one court of

appeal from judgments which are deemed unfair: an appeal to violence. In such esteem was Corfield's justice and wisdom held that every settlement for which he was responsible was accepted with equal satisfaction by both parties in the dispute.

The tribesmen needed but one example of determination: they had it at Mandera. Satisfied as to the sword ■ justice, they asked evidence only of the faithfulness of its scales. They had that, and were content. From Hargeisa to Las Dureh, practically across the whole breadth of that debatable country, the word of the commander "went." The Colonial Office was nervous at the subdivision of his force: they need not have been so long as Corfield was entire.

Even to Mr. Byatt's keen appreciation of Corfield's ability, the rapidity with which settlement was being effected continued to come as a surprise.

"A distinct improvement is to be observed in the internal relations among the friendly tribes living within eighty miles of the coast towns," he reports on 8th February. "By taking immediate advantage of the success of the Constabulary it has been possible to make a comprehensive settlement at Berbera and Mandera of two old and bitter feuds between the Habr Yunis and the Habr Awal, which had been the cause of much bloodshed in the past. Both sides have accepted the awards made. . . . The fine of 500 camels inflicted on certain Habr Awal sections by Mr. Archer in September last, which had remained a dead letter in spite of the time limit imposed, is now being rapidly paid off.

"Progress has been made with the collection from the Habr Yunis of the balance of camels due to meet Abyssinian claims, many sections having voluntarily brought in the shares allotted to them. . . . It is now possible for unprotected travellers to proceed either to Burao or Hargeisa."

For some three years previously, he ■ remembered, a

white man had not dared to move a mile away from Berbera.

From that place Corfield wrote on 10th March: "I got down here on 2nd, as the Commissioner wanted to talk things over with me, and on the 4th got a go of fever, which has kept me in bed till to-day. It's lucky I got it here and not on the march. I'm all right again now, and go out probably the day after to-morrow. I am going to Burao first, and then across to Hargeisa for a month. Oil has been found 30 miles from Berbera, and the samples have been well reported on, and an expert is coming out. We have great hopes that this poor old country is going to be famous yet."

One hears nothing more about the oil, but remembering the buying out of the fibre company, one doubts the encouragement that any commercial enterprise would have received from a Government which still boasted the persistence of their policy of "non-intervention and inactivity."

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE MIRACLE OF HARGEISA.

"It will be within your recollection," writes the Commissioner to the Secretary of State on 6th March, "that the Habr Yunis for a long time were quite intractable and, apart from their own schisms, were the cause of general unrest and bloodshed in the Protectorate. Since the arrival of the Camel Corps in Burao, in January last, the progress which has been made in settling both the internal and external feuds of the tribe has been extraordinary, and has exceeded my most sanguine expectations. As one instance, I may quote the long outstanding trouble of the return of stock looted from Abyssinian subjects. It appeared to me probable that in one or two cases it might be necessary to use force to recover the loot, but I am glad to find that in the course of about five weeks every section of the tribe has brought in the share due from it, and some have paid fines in addition, without any trouble being experienced."

Having succeeded by diplomatic methods in stretching the tether restraining the Camel Corps to Mandera and Burao, Mr. Byatt now ventures, after that report of its achievements, to extend its prescribed 50 mile radius to more than double that distance, and dispatch it to Hargeisa on the Abyssinian border. He was even more daring than that, for with a complete understanding of the situation and reliance on its Commandant, he permitted Corfield to leave Mr. Gibb with 100 men at Burao, and go to Hargeisa, then seething like a pot upon the fire, with but ■ men himself.

Before leaving Burao, there had been but a single difficulty in collecting a fine, with a section of Habr Toljaala, but the Commandant had promptly swooped down upon them, and drove off sufficient stock to meet their liabilities and a trifle extra for their being overdue. No resistance was offered him, and the trouble was at an end. His task at Hargeisa, however, was likely to prove much more difficult.

"The principal job of work here," he writes on 30th March to his old friend and master, Mr. Richardson, "is to arrange a settlement between two tribes called Huan and Esa Damal,"—this is a branch of the Aidagalla. "During the three years Government have ceased to administer or keep the peace in the interior, over 1000 men, women, and children have been killed in the intertribal fighting between these two tribes alone.

"They are here, at these wells, in hundreds and hundreds, a good third armed with excellent Gras and Martini rifles, run in through the French Protectorate. One crowd is camped east of me and one lot west, and so far no affection had been generated between the two. However, not all are in yet, and I haven't started on 'em in earnest."

"The tribes here in the West," he writes to his mother, "are undoubtedly pleased to see the Govt. again, and gave us a great reception, about 300 horsemen and thousands of riflemen and spearmen." Government being two British officers and about 70 Somali camelry.

"I am very busy to-day," he writes a week later, "as hundreds of horsemen and riflemen belonging to a tribe called the Huan have come in this morning, their opponents already being here. I have just had two hours' listening to their chanting, which is a Somali custom, one man sitting on horseback and singing, and the others galloping wildly about, letting off their rifles, and after that I had to go down to the bazaar, as both parties were firing in all directions, and would soon have been fighting.

I am going to have lunch and then have to attend a 'dibaltig,' which is a wild sort of circus on horseback with singing and mimic warfare, by the Huan, but in reality the whole thing is directed against their enemies, the Aida-galla, and in pantomime they show what they have done to them in the way of killing, looting, and mutilation.

"This place is like a powder-mine at present, and instead of a reconciliation there is just as likely to be an almighty scrap."

This letter is the only one which refers to what was perhaps the most difficult and dangerous piece of work which Corfield was called upon to undertake, but does not mention the extraordinary success which attended his arbitration. The number of rifles in the western district turned out to be far greater than had been supposed, and there were at one time no less than 2000 armed men in Hargeisa itself during the negotiations. "Feeling between the hostile sections of the Aidagalla," Mr. Byatt reports, "was very deep and intensely bitter, so that at the moment there was a danger of an outbreak of further fighting, in spite of the presence of the camelry. A threat to raid and punish without discussion or delay a certain truculent section which arrived late was, however, sufficient to avert this possibility, and negotiations were resumed. The old and serious feud among the Aidagalla was finally settled. . . . This settlement was fully accepted by both sides, and representatives of each . . . took an oath . . . to observe it and keep peace for the future."

It was very characteristic of Richard Corfield, with his 70 men in that place seething with thousands of excited savages, to threaten instant punishment without discussion or delay. Rather like another Richard—Richard Grenville—who had just that way with him: threatening incredible things—and doing them.

Corfield returned to Burao after five weeks at Hargeisa, having, by means of "strong representations," obtained



Photo by Capt. C. J. J. J. J.





permission to leave Mr. Dunn and two sections of Camelry there, an obviously necessary precaution, considering the conditions to which the Western district had been abandoned for the past three years, and the sudden contribution to righteousness which had been demanded of it.

Mr. Byatt, who throughout had shown a most commendable comprehension of the appalling condition of the country, and a sound appreciation of the only means by which it could be amended, saw clearly the absolute soundness of Corfield's "strong representations," but the Colonial Secretary was as apprehensive when he heard of the issue as the proverbial hen on first seeing its fledgelings afloat. At the Colonial Office there was apparently a maxim, that no action should be sanctioned to which any risk was attached; but no objection would be taken to the risks run by passivity, however portentous. The Western district might be ablaze again in a moment if left to itself at this juncture, but that contingency was preferred to the responsibility of keeping men there to avert it. If the Camel Corps suffered, awkward questions might be asked in Parliament, but a thousand Somalis might be skinned alive, and not one single protest would be uttered.

The policy of "non-intervention and inactivity" still held the field, and Mr. Dunn and his men were ordered back from where they were to where they were not wanted.

Mr. Byatt, however, deferred the move as long as he was able, and showed a faith in his own conclusions by planning a visit of the Camel Corps to Las Dureh for the settlement of disputes between sections of the Hahr Toljaala.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### AN INCREDIBLE REPRIMAND.

It was on New Year's Day that the Mullah once more essayed the part of general beguiler to the British Government by sending a letter to the Commissioner overflowing with peace and goodwill, while engineering a Dervish advance to threaten and win over the friendlies in the Ain Valley.

To counter that move Mr. Byatt had strongly urged an immediate forward movement of the Camel Corps to the Ain. At that juncture the presence of the Corps and the inspiration of a man with Corfield's influence would, by assuring the wavering tribes of British interest, have resulted in an organisation for defence which would have caused the Dervishes to look for some softer spot to plunder, and almost certainly have prevented the raid which ended so disastrously for the tribesmen and for British prestige. But the Secretary of State once more declined to accept the counsel of the man on the spot, though Mr. Byatt was assuredly no swashbuckler, and with the usual consequences, outrage, murder, a starving population, and a plunge into fresh expenditure and an increase of force. One grows a little tired of the sequence in the affairs of Somaliland.

Encouraged by the Government's refusal to play to his pawn, the Mullah appears to have begun at once to make plans for the development of his game, when the rains and consequent improvement in his ponies' conditions should make a raid advisable.

His New Year's effusion had almost succeeded in being pathetic.

"I have sent many letters to you asking for peace and settlement. You do not listen to my words, and you do not accept the offer of a settlement from me. And every time I sent you a letter you returned me a bad answer and unsuitable words. . . . I also inform you that most of the Dervishes have got beyond my control, and frequently raid the people without my orders, and now I am striving against them and have taken their arms from them and their horses."

The inwardness of the Mullah's pathos was revealed in a letter written by him at the same time to the Gadwein tribe, urging them to stand in with him:

"You are oppressed from ~~the~~ sides," he tells them; "I mean from the side of Warsangli, the Dolbahanta, the infidels and the hypocrites, and the dervishes; may God sympathise with you and give you good patience and make Heaven your dwelling-place." On his showing, they had need of it. "Oh, my brothers and heart's children, I am aloof from anyone whoever annoys you; by God I am, by God I am, by God I am. . . . I am a pilgrim and a holy fighter, and have no wish to gain power and greatness in this world. . . . And I am not one of the hypocrites. I am a dervish, hoping for God's mercy and consent and forgiveness and guidance. . . . Oh, my brothers, this is a time of patience, this is a time of oppression . . . this is a time in which your brother deceives you, it is a time in which your friend kills you, it is a time in which your companion loots you, and it is a time in which the learned men do serve the Christians. May God guide us, may God guide us, may God guide us. Oh, my brothers, be patient. . . . Regret not what you have lost, for God will compensate you fully in this world or in the Resurrection, or both."

To ensure the latter consummation he adjures them to join him, assuring them that "everyone who has looted you has suffered in consequence of my prayers."

Thus he played the game against the hypocrites, being a bit of a dissembler himself, and a month later he was on the move from Damer, his scouts having reached Bohotleh, but without having heard of the presence of the Camel Corps in Burao.

He heard of it, however, not much later; and not only of its presence, but of its success in settling tribal disputes, which was not at all to his liking, since his plans thrive best on tribal discord. To feel his way, and discover how serious were the Government's intentions, he wrote a further letter to the Commissioner, suggesting a personal interview. "To me it is clear," he says, "that there is not to be found in these days the wise and honest man from whom there issues nothing but good, and this refers also to the English," and since there are no honest men left to serve as go-betweens, he is anxious to talk face to face, and offers to come "with ten men or less" to Berbera or Burao, or any place else that the Commissioner may appoint.

Mr. Byatt, in spite of his experience, was inclined to credit the sincerity of the proposal, suggested Sheikh as the meeting-place, the day as soon as possible, offered him an escort from Eil Dab, and gave him "aman" to come and depart; adding, perhaps a trifle hardily, "Ask your people who know the English whether the Government keeps its word or not."

Sustained by this belief, Mr. Byatt summoned Corfield from Hargeisa to make arrangements for the forthcoming interview, as to which Corfield, with a better comprehension of character, had his doubts. "Personally," he writes from Hargeisa, "I think it is all talk and nonsense . . . it will be a very extraordinary thing if he (the Mullah) does come in."

However, on the 29th April he trekked from Hargeisa through heavy rain, and a month later, all hope of the Mullah's appearance having vanished, left Burao, for a twelve days' tour to the eastward, to Geba-geba and

Waridad, returning by the Karimo Hills, able to report an unbroken series of successes in settling claims among the Habr Toljaala.

Meanwhile deserters from the Mullah had arrived at Berbera, reporting his military weakness and urgent need of men. That only 200 of his veterans of ten years ago remained to him, and that his following consisted chiefly of youths, taken from cattle-herding to bear arms. That the Dervish stock had suffered severely from the drought of the early spring, a large number of ponies, so essential to raiding, having died of starvation. That the Dervishes would not attempt to oppose the advance of even a small British force, but that the Mullah would not voluntarily retire from the Nogal.

It was plain, indeed, that the Mullah's affairs had entered upon a new phase, and that his letter was intended "to avert the danger of a hasty descent by the Camel Corps at a moment when he was unable to move, and to give time for the recovery of the ponies after the April rains should provide fresh grazing."

Thus once again there was evidence to show that had Mr. Byatt been permitted to send the Camel Corps to the Ain, the Mullah would have been forced to retire in disastrous circumstances, and possibly an end been made once for all to his pretensions. Never was the folly of a policy of inaction more completely exposed, leaving to your enemy always the choice of time and place, and refraining from any attempt to hustle him when he is too weak to return the blow.

Mr. Byatt had some time before explained of the Mullah that "his influence is no longer of a religious character, and his organisation is essentially a fighting one, which can only be recruited and kept together by the hope of loot," and it was known, moreover, that his physical condition precluded any exertion or rapid movement.

It was known, indeed, some years previously, that the

Mullah was suffering from a disease, named by the Somalis "Bararshi," which Dr. Drake-Brockman describes as "a general cedema or swelling of the whole body, beginning in the feet and ankles, and spreading gradually until it has invaded the whole body. . . . It has so incapacitated the Mullah that he is only able to ride after being placed on horseback with the assistance of six men."

The condition of the Mullah, the contraction of his cause, and the impoverishment of his stock, all encouraged the belief that a vigorous blow, if there was ever the chance to strike it, might bring to an end the awful tale of atrocities, which were growing more numerous and abominable with his declining years. All these facts were, of course, better known to Corfield than to anyone else, in constant touch as he was with the Mullah's affairs, through his admirably organised Illaloes, who, living on the border line of conflict, and dealing frequently with prisoners and deserters, knew a great deal of the Dervish conditions, though very little of the Mullah's plans.

On 10th June, the day after Corfield's return to Burao, Mr. Gibb left for the coast on leave, and, Mr. Byatt sailing from Berbera at about the same date, the country passed to the charge of the Acting Commissioner, Mr. G. F. Archer.

Thus Corfield was left alone at Burao, not, for nine weeks, to see a white man's face, and having a hard task in keeping up the courage of the tribes about him.

For the Mullah, having once more weighed the courage of the British Government and found it wanting, was preparing a raid upon the Protectorate, and the tribesmen knew it.

He had torn up publicly the letter received from Mr. Byatt, thereby adding one more to the humiliations we had prepared for ourselves by continuing to take his overtures seriously, his horsemen were in the Ain, only a hundred riflemen were guarding the Haroun, and Corfield's scouts had here and there come into touch with his outposts. In

spite of the reports as to the weakness of the Mullah, the Dolbahanta and Habr Toljaala were showing marked signs of uneasiness, and though the Acting Commissioner attributed their fears to "the lamentable lack of self-confidence and the poor spirit displayed by our people," the fact that the British Government had absolutely declined to lend them any assistance against the Mullah, and that its Camel Corps had strict orders to fly from Burao on any hint of his approach, was surely sufficient to account for their nervous anxiety about themselves and their belongings.

It was not long before the effect was felt at Burao. Corfield writes on 21st June:

"Last Friday I was woken up at 10.30 p.m. with news that a mounted man had come in from the Dolbahanta 'karias,' grazing near Derkeinle, south of Ber, that 60 Dervish horsemen and a large number of footmen were at Udaweina.

"I moved out at once and reached the karias at 4.30 a.m., and stopped, ready to receive a morning raid; the karias had been moving into Burao all night. However, daylight and investigation showed no more than 12 horsemen and the tracks of some footmen who had cleared, the horsemen also went, only one being killed. I was very annoyed with the Dolbahanta for getting so scared, and dragging me out, over such a small affair. Information, however, is so unreliable that, one day, if one took no notice of a report like that, one would find that a big Dervish raiding-party *had* attacked within striking distance of the Camel Corps, and then one would look foolish if one had not moved out.

"The tribes are more jumpy now than I have ever known them, and are daily expecting something on a big scale."

Now ■ is to be noted, that though Corfield objected to being deprived needlessly of a night's sleep, he only resented the insufficiency of the occasion. It never occurred to him that such a claim for help could possibly be disregarded, and his remark that the Camel Corps *would* have looked foolish



had the raid been a serious one and they not there to deal with it, shows how utterly he was misapprehending the purpose of the Company which he commanded. As Mr. Archer soon made plain to him, the very last thing that the Home Government desired was that he should go to the aid of anyone for any reason.

This was Mr. Archer's reading of the new chivalry as propounded by the Government for its political officers, for which he obtained the hearty commendation of the Secretary of State:

"Though nothing whatever unforeseen occurred on this occasion, and though there is no reason to doubt that the arrival of the Camel Corps on the scene at this juncture could have had other than a steadying effect on our tribesmen in full retreat, yet I cannot pass over the incident without drawing your attention to the explicit nature of the instructions conveyed to you from time to time on the subject of confining Camel Corps operations to the immediate vicinity of Burao (in the Nogal direction), with Ber as an extreme limit for occasional patrols. You are personally aware, moreover, that the Secretary of State has expressly disapproved of the suggestion of employing the Camel Corps against small Dervish parties, even where danger was little and success more or less assured, on the ground that such measures were entirely foreign to the duties of the Constabulary, as well as contrary to Government policy; and there is no discretionary power of any sort on this subject allowed. . . . Admittedly it does not make your position easy, but this is inevitable at the present juncture."

One rubs one's eyes as one reads and wonders ■ one really ■ in a British Protectorate, but of one thing one feels certain, that ■ such conduct had always been required of British officers, there would have been no protectorates anywhere to worry Ministers with their administration. ■ surely ■ the first time in the history of the Empire that the Commander of a British Force was ordered on no account to go to the

rescue of his fellow-subjects by whatever powers of evil they might be assailed, because his corps was not designed for that particular purpose.

This memorandum of Mr. Archer's was a very serious matter, because it strikes at the root of that humanity and self-sacrifice which has made so honourable the Englishman's record among the peoples he has conquered, and it is more serious still because it obtained the unqualified endorsement of the Secretary of State. It thus represents the action imposed on British officers by the King's Ministers. Now what was that action?

In the middle of the night word is brought to the Commander of 150 trained and armed men that some 50 cattle thieves are murdering and plundering the tribes for the sake of whose welfare his force has been raised. The tribesmen are flying in a condition of panic, and he knows that unless this flight is promptly stayed, enormous losses of stock will result, with great sacrifice of human life and terrible destitution. He knows that by turning out his men and marching to the threatened spot he may be able not only to avert the immediate evil, but possibly, by his alacrity, prevent its still more serious extension.

On such an occasion the action prescribed for a British officer is to turn over on his side and go to sleep again. This interpretation of official instructions obtains the approval of Mr. Harcourt in his letter of 18th July. "There is no discretionary power of any sort on this subject allowed. I cannot therefore impress upon you too strongly the necessity of abiding strictly by this decision."

A more uncompromising assertion of a doctrine absolutely fatal to British ascendancy everywhere it is impossible to imagine.

Try to conceive Richard Corfield's position with the tribesmen had he paid any heed to it!

Suppose he had slept on at Burao with his splendid force, which a few weeks later was to wrest victory from

2000 Dervishes, while twelve cattle thieves were left unhindered to cut down women and children, and drive off their stock? Are Ministers quite incapable of understanding that the wonderful influence of men like Richard Corfield is acquired solely by character, and by character to which such action as that prescribed is unthinkably impossible.

They cannot have it both ways. They cannot profit by the magic of such a man to settle in a few months a seething inferno of iniquity, and then demand of him an action detestable to every man of courage. No, if they are to get the benefit of faith and pluck, they must have a policy acceptable to men of staunchness and integrity. Did they expect Richard Corfield on that night of terror to explain to the wailing fugitives that his force, being called a constabulary, could only be used for killing friendlies, not Dervishes? Let them go out themselves, and try to run a savage state on that sort of understanding. They will find it far harder to fool the untutored Somali than the refined intelligence of the House of Commons.

They will find the Somalis as practised orators as themselves, but they will find also that on the Haud words are not mistaken for realities, as they seem sometimes to be in England, and that it is by his indifference, not to argument, but to defeat and death that a man's might is measured.

"Better a thousand Somalis had died than Corfield Sahib," mourned a chief on hearing of his death. "Where shall we find another Corfield!" He was worth that to them, and they knew it, because he was spiritually incapable of such an action as the Secretary of State demanded.

"I cannot attempt to disguise the difficulty of the situation in which Mr. Corfield will be placed," wrote Mr. Archer, "should necessity arise in future to withhold support in the face of a Dervish raid; and when once this situation ■ realised, I fear that the inevitable result will be a general withdrawal from all grazing grounds within the danger zone."

The difficulty of such a situation could be solved by

Richard Corfield in one way only, the way in which it has been solved by British soldiers like him in every corner of the world.

There has been, for at least the last hundred years, a standard of soldierly conduct in emergencies which has the first claim on the consideration of a British officer in dealing with subject peoples. One could prove it by scores of instances in India alone, and chiefly by its observance has the British Empire been so far preserved.

Hitherto its demands have always been appreciated and allowed by the authorities, even when for the moment they seemed to clash with a prescribed duty, and this is happily the first time in our history that a British officer has been ordered to watch his fellow-subjects cut down by the confederates of a rebel, and not on any account to go to their assistance. "No discretionary power of any sort on this subject being allowed."

We have, unhappily, no record of what was Richard Corfield's comment on this memorandum.

"I noticed at Burao," wrote Mr. Archer, "that the difficulty of his position weighed heavily upon his mind." This was after he had received the reprimand forbidding him under any circumstances to engage the Dervishes. And, with reference to the action at Dul Madoba, Mr. Archer admitted: "It is apparent to me that he considered any other action impossible for the sake of our already much-shaken prestige in the country."

There one has from an independent witness a simple explanation of what happened. The difficulties of his position, so unexpectedly created by Mr. Archer's memorandum, explaining the monstrous attitude expected of him, weighed heavily upon his mind, and he saw that for the sake of England's already much-shaken prestige, the only possible action was one in direct conflict with his orders. He said nothing, he was a man of few words, but when the time came he did what seemed to him needful.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE LONELY VIGIL.

JUNE passed fairly peacefully in Burao. "We are having the best rainy season the country has had for years," writes Corfield to a friend, "and the Somalis with their usual superstition put it down to the Camel Corps, and the 'habad-a-Allah' (peace of God) which it has brought. It is quite embarrassing to be continually referred to as an Emissary of the Lord—for a modest person like myself—but it helps matters when one knows the Somali, and realises that he never means more than a third of what he says, and can produce liars in greater quantity and better quality than any race on earth; but they are picturesque liars, and one can't help liking them. . . . The arrival of the Mullah has not materialised, and the Commissioner has gone home on leave, 'fed up' as the vulgar say. I always thought it was a ruse to gain time, as he thought a large expedition was advancing on him. I came back yesterday from a trip some 60 miles east, in his direction, but saw no signs of Dervishes. ■ only the Colonial Office would give us leave to have a go at him, with plenty of ammunition and some money to encourage the tribes, I believe we could break him up. I am always urging this, but the C.O. are as timid as hares, and have regrettable incidents on the brain.

"They have cabled out making me withdraw Dunn from Hargeisa, as the detachment might be cut up; they apparently think a Camel Corps should be kept in cotton-wool. I only wish I had some of those officials out here. Nothing can be done in this country, ■ you are going to

do everything without risk. The C.O. seems to think the Camel Corps should remain in one place and all the rest of the country should fall down and worship it. Brute force is the only recognised authority in this country."

He made plans in the beginning of July to move to Oadwaina for twelve days, sending Mr. Dunn thence to Hargeisa till the end of the month, from which place he was to return to Burao, the Camel Corps being thus reunited at Burao till the Commissioner returned in September.

"A month of the kharif is now over," he writes; "Berbera and the coast must be appalling. How the men stick it down there, I don't know. I can thank the Lord I am up country, 4000 feet above sea-level. It is really wicked of the Government not to allow them to come up country for a few days' rest cure. Fancy the temperature, 100° to 115°, for five months on end, and a howling dust-storm blowing night and day; that's Berbera in the kharif. The natives fly up country, and trade and business are at a standstill for three months."

He refers in this letter to the prohibition placed on the unfortunate coast officials, forbidding them on any consideration to leave the coast, a reflection of which is to be found in Mr. Harcourt's telegram of the 13th August requesting from Mr. Archer "full statement of reasons for your own presence in Burao."

With one of the finest climates in the world within a day's journey, it does seem rather a refinement of brutality to forbid a breath of it to wretched men forced to live for five months in an atmosphere which even natives find unendurable.

"You say I never mention the Mullah," wrote Corfield on 22nd July. "Well, I told you I never thought he would come on, nor has he, and we have not heard anything since. He is now engaged getting his camels and ponies over the dry season. . . . The rains have now fallen, and I expect any day to hear of renewed activity. Our tribes are quiet, and

though I'm fairly hard worked, still I am keeping them quiet, which ■ the main thing."

A week later he wrote, on 28th July:

"A small party of Dervishes looted 90 camels a few days ago, and our pursuing party is still away. Otherwise things are quiet, and long may they remain so. . . . Well, I have nothing to tell you further. I have not seen a white man since Gibb went on 8th June. However, with Dunn returning on 1st, and Archer and Summers arriving in a few days, Burao will be quite gay. . . . Continually on the watch here, especially when alone, gets rather trying after a bit. However, my nerves have never yet been jumpy, thank goodness: there is some point in being a little phlegmatic."

That was his last letter. A fortnight later he had fought his last fight, and given his life for the people he had liked so well and served so faithfully.

Almost on the same date Mr. Archer reported the interior of the Protectorate for the moment entirely satisfactory. That some of the Toljals were standing their ground, and grazing from Ber to Adad, while the Dolbahanta were steadily moving back into the Ain, and extending as far as Little Bohotleh. He mentions, however, a report by deserters that the Mullah proposes sending a force to drive "our outposts westward"—an ambiguous reference which refers, apparently, to the tribes long ago deprived by the Colonial Secretary of any connection with the personal pronoun—with the intention of occupying Adad, Eil Dab, and Bohotleh.

"Such a development would, of course, be very serious," he continues. "All possible steps are therefore being taken to organise effective resistance, should the Mullah attempt to put this plan into execution. . . . I am proceeding to the interior shortly to consult with Mr. Corfield as to the arrangements being made. . . . Now that Mr. Corfield is without the services ■ Mr. Gibb, it would be inexpedient to recall him, at this juncture, from his post at Burao."

That phrase, "his post at Burao," should be noted as an illumination on statements made a little later by Mr. Harcourt in the House of Commons: "The friendly tribes are quiet, and owing to the present state of security on the caravan roads, there has been a very marked increase during this 'kharif' in the number of the Ogaden caravans visiting Berbera. In fact, Ogaden have arrived here who have never previously visited our coast towns as their marts of exchange; and many others again have returned this year to Berbera after an absence of three years, during which time they had transferred their trading operations to other centres, notably Harrar and Jibuti."

This testimony of the miracle of a change which had been wrought by Richard Corfield and his men in eight months is very important, since it not only illustrates what he had accomplished, but a general ripening of confidence in the country which now only required careful nurture to produce really profitable fruit.

What Mr. Archer meant by "all possible steps being taken to organise effective resistance" it is difficult to imagine, since he had just warned Corfield that no resistance to the Mullah's advance was on any account to be attempted. He can hardly have persuaded himself that effective resistance could be organised from the terrified tribes. But perhaps one should not press for too much meaning from such a phrase.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### DUL MADOKA.

MR. ARCHER, with Captain G. H. Summers of the Indian Contingent, arrived in Burao from Berbera on 6th August. Mr. Archer's health had been suffering from that prolonged exposure to the Coast climate to which the Home Government condemned its unfortunate officials, and he had been ordered up to the plateau for change of air. He was also anxious to have a conference with Corfield and Captain Summers on the military situation, which he was beginning to regard with some anxiety.

In his dispatch of the 19th August, he reviews recent events in the country, incidentally reminding Mr. Harcourt of the fact, of which he should have been fully aware, that the Camel Corps had been based on Burao since the 16th January.

"The Corps," he continues, "in its short career had more than justified its existence, by restoring, in a period of little over eight months, complete peace and order amongst the friendlies after two years of undesirable confusion. To have withdrawn the Corps at this juncture, therefore, on the ground of indefinite reports, without some strong reason in support, such as the actual imminence of danger, appeared to me to be an unwarrantable action to take, especially as it ■ only from this centre, Burao—in the opinion of those best able to judge—that the friendly tribes of the Protectorate can be properly controlled, and deterred from continuing their appalling internecine warfare of the years 1911 and 1912, when left by Government to their own devices. I do

not see any good purpose in concealing the fact that about one-third of the male population of the friendly tribes of this Protectorate was exterminated in intertribal fighting."

There did not seem really to be much subject for consultation, since Corfield had been reprimanded on 23rd June for going to the assistance of the friendlies, and the political situation had been reported as "again brighter"—in consequence of that assistance—on 17th July; but two days after Mr. Archer's arrival a new impulse of drama was introduced.

Word was brought into Burao that Dervishes were severely raiding the friendlies in the district between that place and Idoweina, their operations extending to within two or three miles of Ber. Now the Idoweina Hills lie about 80 miles to the south-east of Burao, and Ber is about half-way in nearly the same direction, while the outposts of the raided tribes were at least 30 miles beyond Idoweina.

The reported raid was thus a direct challenge to the authority of the Government, and Mr. Archer for the moment declined to credit it.

"That very morning," he writes, "I had been listening in durbar for four hours to the representations of the friendlies—representations to the effect that, unless Government would come to their assistance, their annihilation at the hands of the Dervishes would be complete within a year or two."

It was a trifle startling to have the truth of this pathetic apostrophe so dramatically confirmed. However, after a discussion with Corfield, he "adopted the view that some action was obviously indicated," and "ordered a strong reconnaissance by the Camel Corps in the direction of Ber to ascertain the facts."

Now, without the least wish to quarrel with Mr. Archer's decision, it obviously is directly opposed to the principles which he had emphatically laid down for Corfield's guidance when confronted by a contingency of this kind.

He had stated in his memorandum of 23rd June that "the Secretary of State has expressly disapproved of the suggestion of employing the Camel Corps against small Dervish parties, even when danger was little and success more or less assured, on the ground that such measures were entirely foreign to the duties of the Constabulary, as well as contrary to Government policy. . . . We do not, and cannot, as at present constituted, assume responsibility for the outlying 'jilibes' at times of threatened Dervish attack"; adding that Ber was to form "an extreme limit for occasional patrols."

Yet here, at the first moment that he was called upon to assume responsibility, we find Mr. Archer transgressing all these principles, and after having censured Corfield for having ridden out to obtain information as to the reported movements of 50 men, he sends him out on a similar mission against 2500; and though Ber was to form an extreme limit for occasional patrols, he dispatches the entire Camel Corps on a strong reconnaissance some miles beyond it. What he meant by a strong reconnaissance one does not know. If he merely desired information he could have obtained it equally well, and with no risk, by employing a few scouts, or at most the pony section of the Corps. When a reconnaissance is made in force—and you cannot make it more in force than with all the force you have—something more than the collection of information is intended; and it is almost incredible that he should send away every man at his command merely to find out what the Dervishes had been doing between Ber and Idoweina.

■ he feared a further Dervish advance he ought to have kept the Corps in Burao; if he thought the Dervishes were in retreat there was no point in sending after them a force forbidden to fight or to attempt recovery of stock; if he wanted information there were better ways of getting it.

His action, as it appears, is entirely commendable; as he explains it, it is difficult to comprehend. After discussion

with Mr. Corfield, he tells us, he *adopted* the view that action was obviously indicated. Like all adopted views, views with which one has no blood relationship, they proved an awkward progeny when left on his hands. The situation was embarrassing. The instructions of the Colonial Secretary were repugnant to every man of common courage and humanity. Corfield's suggestions were those that would naturally occur to an Englishman, and they were backed by a strong personality and intense conviction. That Mr. Archer yielded to them is not surprising and certainly not to his discredit. He was placed in an illogical position by the turn of events, and his action ran the risk of censure by his official superior.

An instant flight from Burao was the policy laid down by the Colonial Office in the event of a Dervish advance, as interpreted by Mr. Archer to Corfield as "the tenour of your instructions." But when it came to the point, Mr. Archer was too much of an Englishman to pay any heed to such instructions, and dispatched the Camel Corps on its vague mission in the direction of Ber.

The pony section, fifteen in number, under Colour-Sergeant Jama Hirsi, had started in advance to get into touch with the enemy, and at 3 p.m., half an hour after consent had been given, and an hour and a half after the news had arrived, the Camel Corps marched out of Burao, with Corfield in command, Mr. C. de S. Dunn as his assistant, Captain G. H. Summers, 94 rank and file and 7 followers, the entire force, with the pony section, thus numbering 119 men. Of this number 8 or 10 camel sows had soon, owing to the condition of their camels, to return to Burao, so that the force was reduced to about 110.

The men carried 140 rounds in bandoliers and cartridge belts; there were 60 rounds for each rifle in reserve, and 4000 with the Maxim carried on a camel. The force advanced along the main track to Kirrit and Bohotleh, which leaves Ber some three miles to the east, information being picked up from wounded and fleeing tribesmen met on the

way. At 7 p.m. it halted in open ground on the Lebbirari Plain, being met at that point by a man from the pony section, who confirmed the report that a large force of Dervishes with quantities of looted stock was retiring towards Idoweina.

The pony section had already had a fight with them, which was, perhaps, scarcely the pony section's business; but some 90 rounds a man had been expended, some loss inflicted, and the section was keeping in touch with the Dervishes who had thus been apprised that some sort of pursuit was on foot.

After an hour's halt, the Camel Corps proceeded, arriving at Der Keinleh at 9 p.m., where a *zariba* was formed and the camels made to lie down in the centre.

The camp was about five miles north-east of Idoweina, and from it the light of the Dervish camp fires could be seen reflected against the sky from the far side of the low ridge which ran diagonally between the two forces, and through the night occasional shots could be heard coming from the same direction. Corfield held a consultation with his interpreter and a headman of the Dolbahanta, who promised that at least 300 tribesmen armed with rifles and spears would be ready at daybreak to assist in the recapture of the looted stock.

At this point the pony section returned, reporting the Dervishes camped at Idoweina with over 2000 footmen all armed with rifles, 150 horsemen, and immense quantities of stock. Corfield had taken every precaution possible against surprise, posting groups in the bush to cover the approach to the square, at one corner of which stood the Maxim cleared for action, and illaloes were despatched to keep him informed of any movement taking place in the Dervish camp. Captain Summers, in his admirable account of the pursuit, reports a consultation between himself and Corfield on the advisability of a night attack or of one at daybreak.

These appear to have been the only alternatives which suggested themselves to Corfield, but Captain Summers strongly advised a reconnaissance of the Dervish position and a retirement to Burao.

That there were sound military reasons in favour of retirement is indisputable, but again one cannot see what point could be gained by further reconnaissance in which the entire force might have become involved. Corfield, who had been more silent than his wont, did not give an instant's consideration to such a course, and decided in the end to place himself across the line of the Dervish retreat and force an action upon them.

In abandoning the intention of a night attack, which had so much to commend it to his fearfully outnumbered force, he doubtless felt that his men were not sufficiently trained to withstand the temptations which the night offers, and that his personal influence in restraining or inspiring them would not count for so much. He sent off a message to the Acting Commissioner that he intended to attack at dawn, distributed ammunition to the Dolbahanta tribesmen, and all lay down to get what rest they could before morning.

It was one of those dark clear nights, radiant with stars, which come at that season on the plateau with a sense almost of coldness after the scorching of the day, and bring so thick a draught of sleep that but a few hours of it is all a man needs for sustenance.

At 3 a.m. the tribal scouts reported that the Dervishes were still at Idoweina, and at 4.30 a.m. the corps stood to arms, moving off an hour later, the illaloes having brought word that the Dervishes were continuing their retirement along the south-west side of the ridge that runs from Idoweina to the Bur Dab Range, and thus straight on Kirrit. With the idea of cutting them off while remaining in concealment as long as possible, the Camel Corps was directed along a line parallel to that of the Dervish retirement, which could now be traced by the vast clouds of dust rising from

the driven stock, but on the other side of the ridge, the north-east of it, the long low back of the hill intervening between them.

The column was still accompanied by about 300 Dolbahanta tribesmen, and the pony section was attempting to keep it in touch with the Dervish movements.

At 6.15, when apparently about a mile in advance of the enemy's column, Corfield changed his direction to the south, moving in column of sections, and on arriving at Magalayer, 6 miles south of Der Keinleh, gave the order to dismount, and the line was formed for action, with the Maxim in front.

The bush had hitherto been fairly open, with a view of 400 yards in either direction, but at this point it was dense, with very rarely a quarter of that range, and as the advance proceeded it grew thicker and thicker, the end of the lean line of men being invisible from the centre. It had been Corfield's intention to penetrate this belt of bush, since on reaching the farther edge of it he would be also on the top of the ridge commanding the fairly open plain across which the Dervishes were then moving, being able to rely himself on a certain amount of cover; but while still 200 yards from his objective, the Dervishes appeared, advancing through the bush, and at once opened a heavy fire.

The camels had been halted 40 yards in rear, and the holders called up to rejoin their sections. Captain Summers suggested forming square, as the little force would plainly be very soon surrounded, but Corfield objected to such a reduction of his front of fire; and so in a more or less irregular line, with the Maxim in the centre, the first Dervish attack was met.

The hour was about 6.50 a.m. of 9th August, and at the first shot the friendly tribesmen, who had been posted on the left, vanished and were seen no more till the fight was over. The Dervish advance was broken and partly concealed by the thick bush, but their attack appeared to be

delivered in successive lines, one reinforcing the other as it dropped before the Constabulary fire.

Thanks to the Maxim and to the formation that Corfield had adopted, the first outburst of fire proved too much for the Dervishes, and after a brief attempt to push the attack home, they suddenly melted away from the front of the position.

Unfortunately some of the sepoy on the right flank, thinking victory assured, started off in pursuit of the enemy, and Mr. Dunn, running after them, had the greatest difficulty in getting most of them back into their places before the second Dervish attack was delivered, with even more determination than the first, and along a more widely extended line, which now began to envelop the flanks of the British force which had been left exposed to any attack from that direction.

It was while this attack was in progress that the Maxim, which was unprovided with a shield, was hit in several places and put out of action, and that Corfield, standing by it, in the thickest of the fire, directed specially at the gun, fell, shot through the head.

When the second attack had been beaten off, at 7.15, and the terrible loss which the Corps had sustained had been discovered, the men were gathered into an irregular zariba, with the wounded in the centre, and so formed they continued to repel the Dervish attacks, some five or six more of which were delivered before noon, by which time they were apparently either nearing the end of their ammunition, or their courage had been too shaken by the reception they had met, to carry them again against the ring of fire. Their rushes had brought them right up against the zariba, Captain Summers, who was three times wounded, shooting down one man right inside the lines.

Some of the friendlies returned when the fighting was over, and reported the Dervishes as being about to retire; but Mr. Dunn, fearing an ambush, waited till 3 p.m., and



then, carrying off all his wounded and the Maxim, marched to Idoweina Well, the wounded being badly in need of water. The Dervishes had fortunately not found the camels which had been left untended in the bush, and although a large number had been killed, enough remained to carry the force back from Idoweina to Gombur Magag, where, at 2 a.m., they were met by Mr. Archer with his escort and every man he could collect.

Mr. Archer had received a somewhat exaggerated account of the engagement at 4.30 p.m. the previous afternoon, which gave, however, the essential facts that only one officer and about thirty men remained in action, and that they felt, at the moment the messengers left, unable to retire. Mr. Archer thereupon collected 100 spearmen and 70 riflemen, and, with his escort of 20 of the Indian Contingent, moved out to the assistance of the beleaguered force.

Mr. Archer has been blamed for not adding his 20 Indians to Corfield's Corps, but it must be remembered that Mr. Archer was not anticipating a fight, and even if he had been it would have been extremely unwise to have denuded Burao of its only dependable defenders. He has been also criticised for at once evacuating Burao and retiring upon the coast.

From the political point of view it would doubtless have been sounder to have held Burao with the 70 or 80 men that remained to him, drawing any support he required from the Indian Contingent which had been moved up to Sheikh. There was indisputable evidence that the Dervishes had been very hard hit, and their appearance before Burao was most improbable. By holding on to the place the panic fears of the tribesmen might have been allayed, and a check imposed on their disastrous stampede; while the continued presence of a British force at Burao would soon have persuaded them to return there.

But Mr. Archer knew that these considerations would have had no weight whatever with the Government, and



*Photo. by Dr. R. E. Drake-Reckman*

**RICHARD CORFIELD AND HIS CAMEL.**



that the desire of Downing Street would be that at any rate the British force should not be left out of the stampede.

Mr. Harcourt's scared impatience to sweep even Sheikh clear of a soldier, showed how exactly Mr. Archer had taken the measure of his masters, and it is difficult to conceive the Secretary of State's excitement had an attempt been made to utilise the victory by holding on to Burso. Mr. Archer had to beg for permission to divert from Sheikh the stream of fugitives which would have submerged Bulhar and Berbera with a flood of destitution, and had to "reiterate his assurance" that no danger was involved by this act of humanity.

With the evidence before him of the Government's mood, it would be most unfair to blame the steps he took to fall in with it.

Men like Corfield, strong enough to assert their own code, must always be rare, and only ruin awaits them. There is nothing to which exception can be taken in Mr. Archer's actions; he did the best that under the circumstances could be done. His report on Dul Madoba is another matter.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### FOR ENGLAND'S HONOUR.

OF the action of Dul Madoba no one has a right to speak who has not studied at least as much of the subject as has been given in these pages. As a military matter it is a very small affair, a mere incidental struggle in the story of a country which has too many such already on its record. But it is a spiritual portent of much greater magnitude. It is the protest of the spirit which made the Empire against the soiling of its memorable traditions.

Corfield stood for that old spirit of unshakable courage and unimpeachable integrity. He had the power of impressing the native with absolute confidence and a worshipping admiration, and he did it simply by being, what so many comrades found him, the straightest and most fearless man they had ever met.

It is not credible that Corfield did not realise all that he was doing. He had been reprimanded but six weeks before for an act of common humanity, and had been told that the Corps under his command was not to be used on any consideration against any description of Dervish force, however certain the chances of victory.

Nothing could possibly have been more definite and nothing so surely have shattered his hopes of seeing the old wrongs repaired.

That he could have looked for sufficient success to justify his disobedience is most unlikely, though he may have expected a sufficient recovery of stock to save the lives of the wretched fugitives he had passed on the way. He may have

thought, and thought with good reason, by sacrificing his own force, to deal the Mullah a blow desperate enough to shatter his declining power.

The victory of a mere local levy, won by means well-nigh incredible, would have, as Corfield knew, a more dissolving effect on the Mullah's influence than any defeat which had ever been inflicted on him by an ordered army, and this success of men like themselves was the only thing likely to wean the tribesmen from their old terror of the Dervish name.

But most of all he knew it would mean to them that England after all had remembered her promises, and would let nothing stand in the way of proving her good faith.

He determined, in short, to commit his country to the old straight ways, and it will be our fault if he has failed of doing it. We must commemorate him not alone by a monument in Berbera, but by a quickened conscience at home. We must remember that his death was caused not by a rash and foolish adventure, but by a grave and predetermined attempt to do what seemed to be his duty. This was a much profounder question than depended on any latitude of interpretation that could be permitted to certain well-known paragraphs as to responsibility in the Field Service Regulations.

In face of Mr. Archer's reprimand, Richard Corfield could not have had the least misunderstanding of what was not expected of him. Mr. Archer had perfectly interpreted Mr. Harcourt's meaning, and Corfield knew it. He saw the unhappy country faced by a repetition of all the horrors it had endured, and the pledges which its poor people had been encouraged to regard as at last to be redeemed by his presence in the country once more dishonoured by an evasion which would not be tolerated in private life.

It was, indeed, a difference in standards of decency which brought about Richard Corfield's death. He lived up to his, and he lies with the brave men that fell beside him, at Dul Madoba. The Government's standard hurried the remains of

his gallant force back to the coast, leaving the "protected" tribes once more exposed to the ravages of their enemies, and a horde of starving and plundered people drifting hopelessly about the desert till their strength failed.

In reply to questions in the House of Commons, Mr. Harcourt appeared anxious to convey an impression of astonishment that the Camel Corps were not at Berbera, or at least within 50 miles of it. Now the Camel Corps had not been at Berbera, nor within 50 miles of it, since the first day that it marched out of camp, and if Mr. Harcourt was not aware of the fact he should have been, as he had referred to it over and over again in his dispatches.

The Corps had been at Adadleh, 53 miles away; at Burao, 80 miles away; at Oadweina, 92 miles away; at Hargeisa, 105 miles away; at Waridad, 135 miles away; and at Wirir and the Karimo Hills, 145 miles away: but not once had it been stationed for so much as a day at Berbera, or within 50 miles of it. Furthermore, Mr. Harcourt's consent had been asked and expressly given for the march of the Corps to Hargeisa, and he knew as late as the 1st June that the Corps had remained there for months, and remained there still. He had also expressly given his consent, as far back as 24th January, for the advance of the Corps to Burao, and his dispatches prove that he had known that that place had continued to remain its headquarters to the very end. Never once does he suggest that Burao should be abandoned, or that the Corps should be withdrawn to Berbera, knowing perfectly well how ludicrous such propositions were, and he had written as late as 18th July approving of the Camel Corps operations being confined to the neighbourhood of Burao. Surely, then, his statement that he could not explain how the Camel Corps came to be there requires some elucidation? Even Dul Madoba was not so far from the coast as other places, where he knew the Camel Corps had been employed, so that his surprising disclaimer could not even apply to the scene of the action.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE VALIANT COMPANY.

THE conduct of the men who fought at Dul Madoba has suffered somewhat from the unsteadiness of their comrades. Captain Summers does, indeed, state that "their bravery was undoubted, and they could not have behaved better or have fought with greater determination," but this brief commendation is outweighed by a previous and much greater volume of dispraise.

When one's nerves are still somewhat shaken by a recent action, it may be natural to remember the events by which they were strained at the time, and it is quite true that 24 rank and file of the Camel Corps retired from the fight at the outset and only reappeared when it was over, and that they were in consequence dismissed with ignominy from the Corps. But the staunchness of those that remained is put beyond question by the dead they left behind them, and reflections on their "lack of training discipline," weakness of section volleys, indifferent "fire discipline and fire control," "unaimed and exceedingly erratic" fire, and failure to maintain "any semblance of their self-control," do but add to one's admiration at their achievement.

It must be remembered that in place of the prescribed 150 men of whom the Camel Corps was presumed to be composed—a figure that has frequently made its appearance in places which had no business to be so ill-informed—the total force that could be mustered marching out of Burao was :

3 officers	
94 camel men	} 119.
■ pony men	
7 followers	



Of these, 9 camel men and a follower were forced to return to Burao owing to lack of condition in their beasts, and 24 others deserted at the enemy's first onslaught. There were thus:

3 officers	} 85,
61 camel men	
11 pony men	
6 followers	

and the force by which they were opposed has been estimated from an average of reports to have consisted of

2000 riflemen	} 2750.
150 horsemen	
600 spearmen	

Of these the spearmen appear to have remained with the stock, and it is doubtful if the horsemen were under fire; if so, they adopted the Mullah's advice and left their ponies at a safe distance. It was impossible, owing to the thick bush, to say if the whole force of riflemen was engaged, but they were not likely to have accepted defeat if they could have put fresh forces into the field; so that, if we exclude the horsemen and spearmen altogether, and some of the former, who are all armed with rifles, were pretty certain to have been present, 2000 for the force actually engaged will not be an outside estimate. The odds, therefore, against the little force that stood its ground was nearly 24 to 1. When one is faced by such odds one is not surprised to find English soldiers lose their heads for a bit, and it seems hypercritical to object that some fourscore of extremely excitable natives with a certain and perhaps horrible death in front of them, were not "as cool and collected as they might have been."

For, be it remembered, this was not a case to which such odds have accustomed us, of the soldier against the savage, the rifle against the spear. In some of our earlier fights with Dervishes, though the numbers were heavily against

us, the proportion of rifles was generally in our favour. Now, however, there was no difference in the armament, and with this supreme test of morale, it is doubtful if English troops could have borne themselves more gallantly, or come out of such a fight with a more splendid record. Of those who stood in the zariba there were—

36 killed	} 85.
21 wounded	
28 survivors	

and the proportion of killed to wounded is evidence how fierce was the fighting and at what close quarters.

That the enemy's shooting was wild is proved by the survival of any member of the force after the first ten minutes, despite the rapidity with which the Maxim was rendered useless, and the number of times it was struck. But the exact distance of a bullet from one's head does not much affect its efficacy as a test of staunchness, and a force that can hold the field after 67 per cent. of its strength has been put out of action can fear no comparison in fighting valour.

The thick bush concealed, no doubt, the losses inflicted upon the enemy, and the condition of the survivors at the finish permitted the Dervish removal of all their wounded men.

All the same, as 377 dead were counted on the scene of the attack, and 18 more found on the road to Olesan, 450 would probably be an extremely conservative estimate of the killed alone—native reports putting it at 500—and a like number were almost certain to have been wounded.

To lose thus nearly half his force, 900 men, in removing but 57 of his opponents, must have been to the Mullah as heavy a blow as Corfield had foreseen, and the complete success of the action, from a military point of view, proves how readily Corfield could, had he only been given a free hand in the matter, have cleared the country of its Dervish pests.

It was not due to his own daring that he lost his life: his death was foreordained by the Government that sent him with little more than 100 camelmen into a country seething with blood feuds, and still at the mercy of a savage oppressor. Forced to do something, the Government determined to do it "on the cheap," and they paid the usual ruinous price for cheapness—they lost the man who, had they only known how to use him, would have saved them some of the thousands they, or their successors, will still have to spend.

They have already confessed the utter inadequacy of their expedients by at once raising the number of the Camel Corps to 300 men, though the increase in number is only too likely to remain nominal, and the discrepancy from establishment figures to prove even more marked than in the past.

Corfield was supposed to command a Camel Corps of 150 men; but 84 were all that he could muster when the call came for action. If 300 men are to be maintained in future, the grant for their maintenance will have to be on a very different scale from that which has hitherto proved so inadequate.

It is idle to make suggestions on any basis that the present Government is likely to supply. They have made public profession of a determination not to attempt any settlement of the country, and now that Richard Corfield is gone they will doubtless be able to ensure that no further blow is struck for British honour. But to those who have other views of national duty, that nameless grave in the desert can never cease to call till the flag of England flies again above it.

There, on those bare hills overlooking the Debateable Valley, where he had been forbidden to plant an English flag, he had planted all of England that was his—himself; and there, to seal their faith in the England that has fellowship with him, those gallant souls that served him fell without flinching.

If there be still in England any fellowship with the spirit which carried Richard Corfield so inflexibly to his doom, it must accept the trust of those that died beside him. Their names, one hopes, will be engraved on any monument to his honour; their faith, one prays, will remain printed on our memories till it has been redeemed. They died, as he died, in England's honour, and there is an end to that for ever if such deaths shall be in vain.

### NOTE.

SINCE this book was written, the Colonial Secretary has announced in the House of Commons a striking change in the Government's attitude to the administration of Somaliland. Mr. Harcourt, in explaining the change, stated that "it was quite clear after these events"—the victory of Dul Madoba and hurried withdrawal from Burao—"that a new situation had been created." It is impossible to conceive in what consisted the novelty of the situation in Somaliland, but it is not difficult to understand wherein lay its newness for the authorities at home. Corfield's action had succeeded in calling the nation's attention to a tragedy for which it was responsible, and the Government had been thereby forced to renounce in word as well as in deed its fatal policy of "non-intervention and inactivity." Corfield's 150 Camelry are to be replaced by a corps of 500, the Indian Contingent in the country is to be raised from 200 to 400, and permanent garrisons are to be placed in Sheikh and Burao.

One welcomes heartily the confession of error and the means taken to repair it, but to state that "a rash act has involved the Government of the Protectorate in a severe set-back, and under the circumstances in a politically disastrous withdrawal from Burao," ■ both indefensible and ungenerous; and its refutation was provided by Mr.

Harcourt himself, when admitting a little later that, so shattering was the blow delivered at Dul Madoba that not a Dervish has since dared to approach Burao, deserted though it has been in deference to Mr. Harcourt's panic fears.

One agrees that the withdrawal from Burao was "politically disastrous"; that it was unnecessary is now made abundantly clear—a corporal's guard might have held it; and one feels sure that it would never have been abandoned but for the spirit of apprehensive timidity with which the Colonial Secretary had infected the Somaliland officials. Mr. Harcourt is still prepared to defend the evacuation of Burao as "necessary to avoid accidents and dangers"; but it is precisely this determined avoidance of "accidents and dangers" which has led to the present situation. You cannot rule a savage people if you are going to evacuate whenever there is a risk of accident or danger.

Dul Madoba, provided its lesson of facing the foe has been learnt, far from involving increased responsibilities has greatly simplified the administration of Somaliland, and the responsibilities the Government have so tardily shouldered have been accepted not because Richard Corfield won a victory at Dul Madoba, but because he died there.

His death has done for Somaliland what no victory ever did or could have done for it—roused our national consciousness. And because of that, and of all that has come of it, may we not feel sure that his name will be honoured amongst those others who have won the nation's gratitude in the past by declining to obey unworthy orders?

Seldom, indeed, may such disobedience be commended, but surely never before has it been so speedily vindicated by the sudden and complete reversal of a Government's policy.

Nor can Mr. Harcourt's statement be permitted that this disobedience was "the result of a long-formed resolve." That resolve dated from the hour, some six weeks before Dul Madoba, when Mr. Archer's reprimand was received absolutely prohibiting any attempt to rescue the friendly

~~WETTERIDGE~~ Dervish outrage. Before that moment Corfield had no expectation of orders he would wish to disobey; after it he knew there was but one course for him.

■ Since that "protection" has at last been conceded to secure which Richard Corfield faced so unflinchingly not only the death that befell him, but the shameful aspersions that were heaped upon his fame, we may be sure that his brave spirit is content, if it be still concerned in earthly matters; but for us the duty remains to see that the concessions he has obtained are not withdrawn on the first opportunity, and that justice shall continue to be done to the people for whom he died.

WETTERIDGE, 26th February 1914.

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